

VOL. 10, NO. 41

May 7, 1983

60¢

Gay Community News

THE WEEKLY FOR LESBIANS AND GAY MALES

BIPAD: 65498



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GayCommunityNews

Vol. 10, No. 41

(617) 426-4469

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May 7, 1983

Boy Love Witchhunt Sparks Anti-Gay Demonstrations

Cops, Townsfolk Prey Upon Missouri Men

By Jil Clark

JOPLIN, MO — Law enforcers have gone on a rampage through the gay male community here in search of a "teenaged homosexual sex ring." In their wake they have left three gay men imprisoned, four others waiting to be tried, two in mental hospitals, many jobs lost and careers destroyed, and a once cohesive community divided — informants against defendants, gays under 16 against gays 17 and older.

Mike Byerly, who allegedly turned state's witness some time last fall, has just become the third adult to be sentenced to seven years at the state penitentiary in Moberly. Sources in the gay community contacted by GCN could not explain why Byerly cooperated with police.

A total of twenty gay men from three counties were charged with having had sex with minors. Charges against eleven of them were dropped when one of the alleged victims recanted his testimony and signed an affidavit stating that the prosecuting attorney and the police had coerced him into stating on video tape that a sex ring was operating in Joplin.

The remaining nine men, implicated by other boys, plea bargained for reduced sentences. Danny Owen, 28, Joseph Henlee, 41, and, most recently Byerly, have been given seven year sentences. Two 19-year-olds — Steve Pickett and Duane Muller — have been committed to Fulton State Hospital for the Criminally Insane for 11 months. Pickett, who was unable to raise bail and was disowned by his parents, tried to kill himself while awaiting trial in jail. The rest are awaiting sentencing.

These men are guilty, according

to Prosecuting Attorney William Fleischaker, of "persuading" 15 to 16 "youngsters" (his estimate reached 30 two months ago) between the ages of 11 and 15 "into homosexual activity by means of alcohol and drugs and sometimes money."

"In only one case was force used . . . [but due to the] intoxicating effects of the drugs and liquor any ability to resist was reduced," Fleischaker told *The Gay News-Telegraph* (TGN-T) in St. Louis.

Judge Herbert Castille has told reporters he is determined to "make an example" of these men.

Joe Robertson, who Fleischaker had described to reporters as his "star witness," signed an affidavit two months ago stating that he'd been threatened by Fleischaker and detectives Jim Nail and Blake Wolf into "telling them what they wanted to hear."

Robertson, 16 years old at the time he was questioned, has a "record" for having been caught smoking marijuana. He said, "Mr. Fleischaker told me, 'One of these days you're going to need a favor and I'm not going to be there to help.'"

Nail and Wolf threatened Robertson with "detention," Robertson said.

Robertson said he had run away twice "to get away from them. They caught me in Amarillo the second time. When Detective Nail saw me in the police station he picked me up in the air by the arms and yelled, 'You little asshole, you don't run out on me.'"

Nail refused to comment about whether he had done this. Police Chief Larry Tennis told GCN the department is not investigating Robertson's allegations about tactics used by Nail and Wolf.

Fleischaker denied Robertson's charge and said he is "convinced that my witness was tampered with." This was an apparent reference to Robertson's adult gay male friends in Joplin.

Robertson told GCN that all the sex between the gay boys and men was consensual. "I know every kid involved and none of it was forced."

"Joplin is loaded with gay kids — and all have sex with men," he added. "When I came out [at the age of 12] I didn't know any gay boys."

Some gay men and others here in Joplin suspect that the investigation, which was conducted in a very flamboyant manner, was designed to inflict the maximum possible damage on the gay male community. The full names and addresses of the men charged were released to the press and many arrests were made in public places or workplaces, with numerous squad cars — lights and sirens on — used to cart off a single person.

The investigation has hurt gay men here in other ways as well. Danny Owen, the first to go to prison, alleges that his former lover Mike Byerly, sentenced this month, turned state's evidence against him.

Terry Murphy, a gay man beaten by the cops at a recent anti-gay demonstration inspired by the sex ring scandal (see related article) said, "Police have been successful at lodging groups against each other. Younger gays are distrustful of older ones, older gays feel the younger ones betrayed them."

Robertson repeatedly said he was "really scared" of the police and has been "hiding out" for months. "Now that I'm 17, I can just imagine what they'd do — I've

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By Jil Clark

JOPLIN, MO — Countless times in the past half year the Jasper County Prosecuting Attorney has prevailed upon parents to "be vigilant" about keeping their children away from a score of men who are operating a "teenage homosexual prostitution ring."

Some citizens of Joplin have heeded the warning. For the last two Saturday nights, a small group has picketed outside Billy's II, a bar which caters primarily to lesbians and gay men. Their leader, a young mother named Chris Mur-

showed four police dragging him across the street, dropping him on the pavement and throwing him head first into the paddy wagon.

One week later, eight people attempted to picket without a permit. When the cops arrived to hand out citations for violations of this ordinance, one officer mistook a reporter from the local newspaper, the *Joplin Globe*, for a patron of Billy's II. Operating under this assumption, officer Dan Spear knocked reporter Max McCoy to the ground, handcuffed him, and along with other officers,



Joplin Globe

Pickers at Joplin gay bar with anti-gay placards.

ray, has vowed that the groups will be there — with flag-hating slogans on their signs and on the T-shirts of their children — each Saturday night until every queer has left downtown Joplin.

The group has also distributed thousands of leaflets in mail boxes and on car windshields around town.

GCN asked Prosecuting Attorney William Fleischaker if he thinks the picketers were inspired by his highly publicized "sex ring" investigation.

"I didn't tell anybody to picket," he replied, "I said it was a matter for public involvement . . . People should know where their 12- and 13-year olds are at night."

"Some of the people in the picket came to my office and presented petitions saying I hadn't been tough enough [on the men already tried and sentenced]. A bunch of protestors got on TV and indicated they were going to go to my house and sit in the backyard . . . People protesting the light sentences aren't the people facing the possibility of their child taking the stand and testifying."

Twenty-five concerned parents, some with their small children, held the first picket on April 16, with signs urging passersby to "Stop Perversion," "Show Kids We Care," and "Nix Homosexual Bar."

Terry Murphy, a gay man arrested for assault on one of the picketers, alleges he assaulted no one but rather was himself badly beaten by cops at the scene.

"Police say I took a picture. But my friend had the camera. He took a picture of a kid with a T-shirt saying something like 'Queers have bad blood.' I heard a woman say, 'You don't take pictures of my children.' Somebody grabbed me from behind and started choking me. I blacked out."

Murphy said that he did not remember being beaten, but that he watched film footage on the television news that evening which

beat and kicked him.

Police Chief Larry Tennis told GCN that no inquiry is underway into the behavior of Spear and the other officers.

The owners of the *Globe*, a daily which, according to Murphy, consistently paints Joplin cops in a favorable light, is suing the police department.

GCN asked McCoy whether this experience had taught him anything about what it is like to be a faggot when the cops come around. McCoy replied, "No, I've just learned something about the treatment of reporters by Joplin police. That's all I've learned."

The editors "strongly recommended" that Spear and the other assailants be suspended pending a complete investigation by the police department.

Murray told reporters that the bar poses a threat to children walking home from school. Memorial High School, soon to become a middle school, is two blocks west of the bar.

"It's time we woke up and realized that it's going on," she said, referring to the rumor, spread by the *Globe*, that most of the 18 men indicted in Jasper County and most of the eight minors who testified against them before the grand jury frequented Billy's II. "We want it out of downtown Joplin," said Murray.

"This bar doesn't have a damn thing to do with those people," who were indicted and convicted, said Kurkendall. "They didn't come in here and neither did any of the boys. You have to be 21 to drink in Missouri. We check I.D.'s at the door. We'd be crazy not to. The police come around here more than any other bar to check I.D.'s."

Kurkendall said he known only one of the boys who testified, Joe Robertson. (See related article, this issue.) "I know only him because he's been out on the street for four years . . . looking for male companionship. Little Joe

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News Commentary

Burton's Death Robs Gays of Ally

By John Mehling

SAN FRANCISCO — Representative Phillip Burton (D-CA) died suddenly on April 10 while on a brief visit to his home district.

The 56-year-old legislator was an outspoken supporter of organized labor and racial minorities. He also played a key role in reforming congressional procedures in the mid-'70s. And over the past ten years, Burton had become increasingly vocal about environmental, feminist, lesbian and gay issues.

Elected to the California State Assembly in 1956 and to Congress in 1964, Burton combined a passion for justice and equality with consummate legislative skills, to earn him the reputation as the most powerful progressive politician in the country.

One Northern California Democrat has remarked that "Phil was a human political computer. He knew more about politics than anyone," adding that "there is no way you can replace that."

Another Democrat, however, conceded that "in a sense, he prevented others from blooming. Now these people will have a chance to bloom."

This may be true for the more entrenched liberal groups, but for lesbians and gay men, Burton's absence will be a more difficult prob-

lem to solve. The lesbian and gay community, with relatively few supporters in Congress, has even fewer powerful ones.

Bill Kraus, who was Burton's aide on gay issues, reflected on the politician's relationship with the gay community and assessed the impact of his death. According to Kraus, Burton was a progressive who "worked within a traditional structure." Although for many years, Burton had intuitively understood gay concerns, they were not initially a priority for him.

The turning points for Burton, Kraus explained, were Harvey Milk's successful 1977 campaign for San Francisco City Supervisor and, in 1978, the mobilization of the California lesbian and gay community to defeat the infamous Briggs Initiative. After these two events, Burton became more responsive to the gay movement's legislative political agenda.

Among his activities in support of the nation's gay community, Burton, with New York City's Rep. Ted Weiss, addressed the 1979 March on Washington for Lesbian/Gay Rights. He co-sponsored, and more importantly, persuaded many of his colleagues to co-sponsor, the national gay rights bill, boosting its legislative support to a still record number of 63

legislators.

Burton had recently introduced legislation to increase federal funding for AIDS research. Simultaneously, he was using his extensive connections to work for the release of previously appropriated funds for the National Institutes of Health.

Kraus states that he himself spent 80% of his staff-time on AIDS, with Burton's approval. Burton, unlike some of his colleagues, expected Kraus to use his position and time "to further the interests of the community," as opposed to being a buffer between Burton and his gay constituents.

Though Burton's death is a severe setback in the battle for AIDS funding, Kraus believes that the money will eventually be gotten.

Kraus continues to work for the late Congressman's office and is involved after-hours in the campaign of Burton's widow, Sala, to take her husband's seat in the House. Sala Burton is a political activist in her own right and worked closely with her husband on many issues. In Washington, she is known for her work on feminist and peace causes. It is thought that Sala Burton will win easily in the special election to choose her husband's successor.

News Notes

quote of the week

"In this issue of *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, David Crews brings to our attention yet another of nature's departures from the male/female formula of procreation, namely the phenomenon of parthenogenesis in a reptile. . . . These discoveries open up new empirical vistas for further research into the origins and determinants of bimodel sexual behavior. They also serve linguistic notice on all of us to watch our semantics and not to use male and female loosely as attributes of behavior, when, in fact, the behavior concerned may be sex-shared. The definitions of heterosexual and homosexual would appear to stand in need of revision."

— John Money, sex researcher and psychiatry faculty member of Johns Hopkins University, commenting on parthenogenesis in whiptail lizards, (*C. uniparens*), the so-called "lesbian lizards."

more bad laws against prostitutes, gays

BOSTON — Governor Michael Dukakis has signed into law two bills of interest to lesbians and gay men.

HB 5959 expands the common nightwalking law to include "common street walkers." This means that both men and women on the street can be harassed and arrested for prostitution day or night. According to the No Bad Women — Just Bad Laws Committee, this will make prostitutes more dependent on pimps and all women more vulnerable to police harassment.

The law also doubles the maximum prison sentences, to one year, for the selling and buying of sex and increases the fines for same from \$200 to \$500. A No Bad Woman spokesperson commented that this will result in more revenue for the state from collected fines, which she believes is the reason for the law.

S 1741 closes a rural highway rest stop known as a popular gay male cruising spot (See *GCN*, Vol. 10, No. 30.) The rest stop, located on Rte. 3 at the Westford/Chelmsford town line, became the center of controversy when residents complained of homosexual activity in the woods surrounding it.

gay poles

WARSAW — Recent visitors to Poland report an increase of visible gay male culture in that country, according to *Campaign*.

Since the government declared martial law and turned its attention to repressing the 10 million-member union Solidarity, the gay scene is flourishing at private parties, on nude beaches and in official and unofficial literary publications. In addition, both a pantomime theater in Wroclaw and a ballet theater in Warsaw have produced works dealing with gay relationships. The ballet, which depicted Tchaikovsky's relationship with his manservant a bit too explicitly, was shut down by the government at the request of the Soviet ambassador. But, many other expressions of gay love have gone uninterrupted by government censors.

It is thought that the state is too busy with Solidarity to bother with homosexuals and that the social gains realized by Solidarity have not yet been eroded by the government.

fly us, but leave your boyfriend at home

SACRAMENTO — A gay man employed by Frontier Airlines has filed suit against the company because they refuse to grant reduced air travel rates to his lover of nine years, according to the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Allen Chamberlain, a steward for the airline, stated in his suit that he and his lover have been denied benefits granted to heterosexual employees because they are gay. Chamberlain and his lover, Joe Shields, both of Sacramento, took out a marriage license in 1979 in Denver to qualify for the reduced travel rates, but he said Frontier refuses to recognize it.

"A dozen times, I have told the company, 'I love Joe. We've been together for nine years. This is a stable relationship.' And every time, they stonewall us, claiming he doesn't exist," said Chamberlain.

A spokesman for Frontier acknowledged that Frontier does not recognize the relationship and said, "That will be up to the courts to decide."

group leaflets to 'resist hysteria-mongering' about man/boy love

CHICAGO — The Chicago Stonewall Committee distributed informational leaflets entitled "Youth, Sex and Gays" at the premier of the film *Abuse*.

Abuse was the opening night feature of the Third Annual Lesbian and Gay Film Festival which got underway on April 7. Chicago Stonewall handed out nearly 500 of the leaflets, which quoted from the North American Man/Boy Love Association newsletter, the *Body Politic* and *GCN*.

The flyer states, in part, "We must resist the hysteria-mongering of the media, religion and other 'authorities.' We must challenge the ignorance and stereotypes about young people and about sexuality in general. We must actively defend all those under attack for consensual sexual relations."

Following the screening, filmmaker Arthur Bresnan discussed with the audience his support for consensual intergenerational gay relationships.



intergenerational sex discussed down under

SYDNEY — The above cartoon appeared on a flyer inviting the citizenry of Sydney to a round table discussion on intergenerational relationships. About 40 people attended the discussion sponsored by the Gay Solidarity Group. The round table is reported to have been non-confrontational and, at times, humorous.

One man, a self-identified boy-lover, said that he preferred to be called a "rockspider" rather than a pedophile. Another man commented that that name made him want to grab a can of bug spray.

It was observed that Australian age-of-consent laws are not likely to be changed in the near future and that energy would be better spent on consciousness-raising efforts to help adults understand children's sexuality.

never in private, private

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA — Gay male sexual activity is still illegal in the Australian armed forces under a new adopted Defence Forces Discipline Bill, according to *Campaign*.

Under the bill, sexual conduct is legal when occurring between two consenting adult men in private. However, a special definition of "in private" was written to exclude the following: "on service land, in a service ship, aircraft or vehicle, or by a person while taking part in a deployment, exercise or operation of the Defence Force."

In other words, homosexual activity is illegal for Australian military personnel except when personnel are off-duty, off the property, out of uniform and out of sight.

defense fund formed for club 80 patrons

SYDNEY — A defense fund to aid those men arrested in the Club 80 raids was set up on April 10. Named the Lambda Legal Defence Fund Trust, the fund will also ensure adequate legal representation for any persons charged under New South Wales laws used in a repressive way against lesbians and gay men.

The number of people charged in the Club 80 raids has risen to 18 with the charging of the proprietor of the club for "aiding and abetting."

The first hearing is scheduled for June 20, but plans are underway to insist on block hearings for all persons arrested in the raids.

peacequeers organize in kansas city

KANSAS CITY — A group of gay men and lesbians has formed here to align themselves with the global peace movement.

Called Lesbians and Gays for World Peace, the organization hopes to create a national network to promote discussion of global peace issues; to organize individuals who wish to speak directly and publicly on the need for international disarmament; to provide an educational resource for lesbians and gay men concerned with world peace issues.

They can be contacted at 3704 Baltimore, Kansas City, MO 64111.

lesbianity furor

CLAREMONT, CA — When a lesbian student was selected to be a residence hall assistant (RA) on the same day that she published a coming-out piece for Gay Awareness Week at her school, a bit of a flap ensued. Some students threatened to leave the dorm and meetings were held to discuss the ramifications of the queer RA.

The Claremont College *Collage*, in their reports on the controversy, quoted one student as saying, "A lot of those girls had just never had to deal with the issue of *lesbianity* before." (Italics ours.)

Things have calmed down after the initial flutter. The students are warming up to the RA and it looks like she'll keep her job. And, thanks to the girls in Dorsey Hall, we've added the issue of "lesbianity" to our political vocabulary.

no noisy queers in san francisco?

WASHINGTON — The Democratic Party has selected San Francisco as its host city for the 1984 national convention, according to the *New York Post*.

The city will invest about \$8.5 million to host the convention and is expected to get a return of \$30-40 million on their money.

Mayor Dianne Feinstein shouted "Whooppee!" when told by party chairman Charles Manatt of the decision. Feinstein has promised the Democrats that there would be no unsightly demonstrations by San Francisco's large activist homosexual community. Nor, said the mayor, would there be "any other major demonstrations. We give our word on that."

before stonewall needs bucks

NEW YORK — The makers of *Before Stonewall*, the first feature film documenting the history of the American gay/lesbian community, have announced that they need to raise the remaining \$25,000 of their total budget of \$240,000.

They have received grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the New York Council for the Humanities and the New York State Council on the Arts, but the grants must be matched by money from private sources. Interested gay and lesbian citizens can help bring to light the struggles of our community prior to the Stonewall Uprising in 1969. For more information and to make a contribution, write *Before Stonewall*, 630 Ninth Avenue, Ste. 908, NY, NY 10036.

alaskans nix coed johns in era resolution

JUNEAU — In the Alaska statehouse last month, the muddling of issues reached new levels of cloudiness and obfuscation.

According to the Anchorage *Daily News*, a proposed resolution calling on the U.S. Congress to provide for another vote on the Equal Rights Amendment includes a provision that Alaskans do not support "homosexuality, lesbianism and unisexuality."

The amendment was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee at the urging of women who testified against the resolution. The women maintained that the ERA would lead to a more sexually permissive society with homosexuality, lesbianism and "unisexuality (men and women using the same bathroom)."

The ERA makes no mention of sexual preference or toilet facilities.

FBI Involvement Suspected

Students Victims of Homophobic Attacks

By Jil Clark

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY — A year-long barrage of homophobic attacks on several lesbian and gay activists at Vassar College has left them frightened, angry, and distrustful of the administration. Some suspect that either federal intelligence agents or members of a local hate group are behind the hate campaign.

Several leaders of the Gay People's Alliance (GPA) have been assaulted, threatened with death, had their possessions vandalized and their dorm rooms searched, and have been followed, photographed and questioned by men who are not Vassar students.

The incident which has come to light most recently does involve student assailants, however. A group of four to six Vassar men who, according to GPA members, call themselves "the sur! nazis," lobbed a firecracker into a dorm room in which two "closeted" les-

bians were sleeping. The group has also been credited with drawing a swastika on the elevator of the dorm in which they live and verbally harassing the two lesbians and others around campus. The men were called before college court in mid April. According to an unofficial report from an attorney for GPA members, the court did not expell the men, but rather separated them from one another by moving them to different dorms.

Aside from the session in college court, the only tangible responses of the administration in the past year have been the posting of notices — one in the wake of a spate of death threats to two gay activists last spring, another during an outbreak of obscene phone threats in November. Both letters decried intolerance and encouraged anyone with information about the harassers to come forward.

GPA steering committee member Michael Feldman (not his real name) said that Natalie Marshall, vice-president of student services, has been "unhelpful at best." For instance, he said, Marshall failed to post a memo on the student bulletin boards when he was beaten up in the fall, although this procedure is supposed to be followed in all assaults on campus. He added that the campus security guards' report made no mention of the anti-gay nature of the assault.

Marshall, who is responsible for the drafting and posting of these bulletins, told *GCN* that the administration has taken the reports of Feldman and others "very seriously." She said that Feldman told her he had been advised by his attorneys not to publicize the assault. Feldman said that he made it clear to Marshall that he wanted it posted "because gay students need to know about this."

Attorneys for Lambda Legal Defense and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), who became involved in the case in the fall at the request of GPA leaders frustrated with the administration's response, have met twice with college administrators to suggest steps that the college could take to avoid further violence.

Following a meeting on April 20, Pat Maher of Lambda reported that Marshall and the Dean of the College, Patrick Sullivan, have "done very little since our last meeting."

Maher continued, "We asked them whether they had set up procedures for dealing with anti-gay harassment; whether they had established a liaison to lesbian and gay students; whether they had hired a private investigator; whether they had issued a statement to all students saying that the college is not willingly involved in any surveillance by the government; whether they had begun to train and educate security (police) about anti-gay harassment and about racism. They hadn't really done anything. They waffled right and left and said they have to go through certain procedures involving the faculty. I said this is an emergency . . . It's an outrage that [some gay students] have had to undergo all this all year, yet the administration is just sitting on their hands."

Marshall was unreachable for comment after the meeting, but she had said at an earlier date that the college already has a private investigator and that the college's committee on sexual harassment is already working on an improved grievance procedure.

Cass and Feldman told *GCN* that administrators are not going to solve the problem because they believe the graduation of Cass and Feldman will solve it for them. Both are leaving Vassar this year. Cass said the administration is hoping that the lesbian and gay students who remain will be more closeted and less noisy about anti-gay harassment.

Maher concluded, "The student body has got to organize at this point. There's nothing else we can do from the outside."

In the meantime, as the end of the semester approaches, Maher and many Vassar students are growing increasingly apprehensive about the welfare of lesbian and gay activists here.

"Things have been calmer for a while," said Maher, "But the pattern has been more harassment toward the beginning and end of semesters."

The wave of anti-gay harassment began last March, immediately following an anti-racist protest at a U.S. post office in Poughkeepsie, at which Cass identified herself as a member of the Vassar Gay People's Alliance and a third world lesbian, spoke along similar lines. The rally was "well-attended," said Cass, "featuring many anonymous photographers and tape recorders. We were both photographed speaking."

At this time, many members of the GPA steering committee began experiencing harassment: cars swerved at them on the road and the occupants screamed anti-gay epithets and threw bottles at the gay pedestrians.

Feldman was verbally abused and beaten by two men on the night of October 14. While one man had Feldman pinned against a tree, the other told him, "This is only the beginning. It will get worse if you remain here." Feldman was unable to positively identify the assailants among photos of students which he looked at in Marshall's office the next day.

In the beginning of November, death-threatening phone calls were made to Cass and Feldman and another lesbian activist, and Feldman received a bomb threat on December 17. The language used in the calls, which students believe were made by the same person, was similar to that used in the notes and physical attacks.

Feldman, Cass and others maintain that they have been systematically followed, watched, photographed, and questioned about themselves and the GPA by men on campus who are not Vassar students. Throughout the fall, a man attended GPA meetings, identifying himself as a friend of gay journalist Arthur Bell, and a writer from the *Village Voice*, researching an article about lesbian and gay male college students in the Hudson River area.

Students told *GCN* that, upon investigation, this alibi was found to be false. Marshall, however, said that the imposter at the GPA meetings had been "checked out" and that she is "absolutely convinced that particular person is not involved."

Maher thinks it is "very odd that the students harassed couldn't identify (their harassers) as students." She suspects "something is going on outside the college — even it's a New Right group with a connection on the administration or faculty."

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Conference Commentary

Narrowing Positions or Expanding Visions?

By Susan Saxe

WASHINGTON, DC — From April 7th to 10th 2500 women attended the 14th National Conference on Women and the Law. This year's conference was held in Washington, D.C. at the city's Convention Center.

The conference through the years has had its ups and downs, as planners struggled to resolve or at least move forward on the same issues that have confronted the women's movement as a whole. How do we deal with racism and classism, make our events more accessible to women of different means and abilities, accommodate different cultures and priorities? How do we deal with demands for more "professionally oriented" workshops from some women and challenges to open up the meaning of legal struggle to include community organizing, political action and self help on the other hand?

The theme of this year's conference was "Unity and Empowerment," and if numbers mean anything, it was the most representative in its 14 year history, both in terms of who was on the various committees that planned the conference and who attended it. Of the 36 members of the Steering Committee, 26 were women of color, over half were visible (publically out) lesbians and two were disabled women.

The programming reflected the increased diversity and political consciousness of the planners. There was a strong commitment to address issues of concern to Third World women and lesbians, and a lot of emphasis throughout the whole conference on addressing economic issues and developing strategies to fight the rise of the Right.

Workshops were divided into "clusters" (major topics) with Third World and lesbian issues being some of the largest. The Third World Women/Women of Color Issues cluster contained twenty-one workshops, ranging from the participation of Women of Color in the Feminist Movement to strategy workshops on survival issues, employment and access to power within existing public institutions. The Lesbian Issues cluster covered everything from mediation within the lesbian community to dealing with the "isms" that divide us to one titled "Lesbians and Elected Office: Can You Do Both?"

On first impression, the conference was simply overwhelming. There were 2500 women from all over the country gathered for three

days of intense meeting, sharing, arguing, socializing and agonizing over how to fit well over 200 fascinating workshops into the nine allocated workshop periods.

The final impression was also overwhelming, but in a different way. It was a picture of deep and maybe unresolvable differences between women, all of us dedicated in one way or another to a vision of a feminist future, but with little common ground as to what that future will be. It's not just a matter of strategy and tactics, how we get from here to there, but of real issues about who is in that future with us, what are our problems and who are our friends and enemies, allies or obstacles.

The two workshops leaving the most positive and negative impressions were one on dealing with the "isms" in the lesbian community and one on the politics of women's sexuality.

Demita Frazier and Tia Cross, community activists from the Boston area, and Amy Oppenheimer from Legal Services of North Virginia, led the workshop titled, "Dealing with Racism, Classism and Anti-Semitism in the Lesbian Community."

Demita discussed her experiences as a black woman in Chicago Lesbian Liberation in the early '70s. She had encountered an unwillingness of the white women to deal with racism and the inability of the black women to talk about it except among themselves, while the whole issue was masked over by an ideology of "we're all equally oppressed as women."

Amy focused on the assumptions about Jewish women in the women's community to open up the question of the origin of our assumptions and values. What does it mean when we hear "there are a disproportionate number of Jewish women in the women's/lesbian community" and does it mean too many? Who decided that the ideal dyke was tall, flat-chested, slim-hipped, handy around the house and plays softball?

Tia, introducing herself as a middle-class Yankee WASP from New England, talked about her struggle to confront racism, classism and anti-semitism in her own background and in the world around her. She asked us to pause for a minute and imagine our vision of our feminist/lesbian future world. Then she asked who is in the picture, what colors are they, what languages they speak, what are their sizes, styles, and different abilities. She encouraged us to ex-

pand that vision in ourselves and in our community, to visualize a lesbian future free of "isms," and to find the courage and creativity to envision health as part of the process of healing.

The workshop titled "The Politics of Women's Sexuality," far from expanding anyone's vision of our future, encouraged women to lock themselves into their most narrow positions and club each other from behind the barricades. A serious problem was the lack of a panel to set the tone for an open personal discussion. The moderator's role was simply to set in motion a terrible dynamic and then sit back and call on raised hands as the situation deteriorated.

It began with a survey of the room to determine how each of the 150 women identified herself, the categories being heterosexual, lesbian, bi-sexual, s/m, prostitute, celebrate and Third World(!). There was no format to challenge why "Third World" was considered a sexual category, or why every woman there, except the heterosexual women, should take risks by identifying themselves in a room full of strangers.

We were then asked to write down discussion questions and a list of all the stereotypes we had heard about each sexual category. This allowed women to throw out even the most hurtful stereotypes without claiming responsibility for what they said.

Another question was, "Describe an incident you have participated in which involved either homophobia or lesbian chauvinism." This was said as if their were such a thing as "lesbian chauvinism" and the two were equal sides of the same coin.

The discussion took off from that point and became a trashing session in which heterosexual women complained about all the bad, divisive lesbians who accuse them of not being good feminists just because they happen to sleep with men. One woman actually said that she'd like to hang out with lesbians more, but she gets offended because "they drink so much."

There was more to the conference, including a great turn-out of legal workers and community organizers for the workshop on women in prison. It was also exciting to see the direction that the conference has taken, and the commitment of so many women to move it and us in the direction of that ever expanding vision of our future.

Parole Hearing For Air Force Officer

By Jil Clark

FT. LEAVENWORTH, KS—An Air Force Lieutenant sentenced to six years at hard labor for lesbian sex and two incidental drug charges appeared before a military parole board on April 20.

Joann Newak, jailed at the army prison here, was granted a hearing before the Air Force Disposition Board long before it had been expected. Although her attorney says the results of the hearing will not be announced for four to six weeks, pending review by Air Force Bureaucrats in Washington, the fact that she had the hearing at all is indicative of a change of attitude on the part of the Air Force.

The Disposition Board hearing could result in a release as early as June, 1983, when Newak will have served 12 months of her sentence.

The parole hearing came about after Major General Thomas B. Bruton signed a clemency order on March 23, halving Newak's six year sentence and making her eligible for parole after one year in military prison. Bruton's order, issued without comment, modifies the extraordinarily harsh sentence of the court martial board and the review board that upheld it.

Newak's case has received a lot of publicity, which grew out of the attention paid to the case by Washington *Post* columnist Colman McCarthy. Faith Seidenberg, one of Newak's lawyers, believes that Newak's case has become an embarrassment to the Air Force and that this may explain the apparent change in attitude.

— filed from Boston

Community Voices

progressive s/m

Dear GCN Readers:

We are LOUISE (Lesbians Operating Under Intense Sexual Excitement), a Lesbian feminist s/m support group. We are defiant wimons who got together not to defend or apologize for ourselves and our sexuality, but because we enjoy our sexuality. We are Lesbians — wimons who have sex with wimons only. We are feminists — committed to economic, political, social and sexual power for wimons. Most of us do political work with other groups besides LOUISE.

All of us are for and against many things: for freedom, justice and equality, and against all the power structures that stand in their way. The ultimate goal of our political work is to make a world where everyone can experience that happiness which comes with liberation. We have political disagreements about how to achieve the kind of world we want to live in, but not about what we need to get rid of. We are against hierarchies based on gender, race, ethnicity, economic class background, age, sexual orientation or style, religion, caste, appearance, body size, physical or mental disability, or history of incarceration. In fact, we are against class systems. This includes the international class system of imperialism led by the U.S., the U.S.S.R. and other big powers. As feminists, we support wimons' control over their bodies; we are particularly against rape, coerced sex, non-consensual incest, battering, forced sterilization, forced childbearing and forced childrearing.

Most people think of s/m as being exemplified by the sexual practices of deSade and Sacher-Masoch. We in LOUISE say that what they did was violence and coercion, not s/m. Some of the many people today who routinely practice violence claim to be doing s/m, but they aren't either. We define s/m as the appearance of an exchange of power in a consensual and usually erotic setting. It is often accompanied by props such as whips, silk or pain, but these are not always necessary. We think s/m can be used very progressively. For example, in s/m one can find things in oneself and communicate with one's partner(s) from the deepest levels of one's being. Besides, it feels wonderful! Wimons in touch with their wants and needs are strong wimons. S/m is an excellent tool for healing. We are searching for a new name for these experiences to distinguish them from what's commonly thought of as s/m.

We see the apparent contradiction between our politics — trying to build a world where everyone has equal power — and our playing with power differences in our sexuality. But the contradiction is not real. The fact that some people sometimes in their s/m scenes use images from real-life power imbalances is not enough to invalidate the whole s/m experience, which is based upon real and healthy desires. Some of us feel that the use of such images in certain private settings is acceptable, while others don't. In fact, we disagree about whether or not everything consensual is o.k.

We want sexual desire to be freed from the strictures imposed by the rulers of our society. Of course, no one living under the patriarchy and imperialism is free from their influence. We don't understand how people who criticize s/m can claim to know more about free sexuality than we do, coming from these same circumstances. Our s/m feelings, like our Lesbianism, are spontaneous for us, and not a product only of the current set-up of society; both would exist under other circumstances.

Because we are so forward in supporting wimons' control of their sexuality, we threaten the power structure and for that reason are attacked by it. We're oppressed by anti-s/m people the same way that gays are oppressed by homophobes. The anti-s/m forces are more consistently against consensual power trips than non-consensual ones, which are the norm in our society. It's dangerous to say what you're for, especially if you're for anything progressive. By being for things, rather than just against things, you make yourself a target. But we will not be deterred. We think sex is important enough to deal with even when people are starving.

We will talk to any feminist wimon about their honest questions about s/m, but we won't apologize to anyone. Any s/m dykes who aren't into apologies and who would like to join us can contact us at (415) 285-5978.

LOUISE
San Francisco Bay Area

FEATURES EDITOR

Gay Community News is looking for a Features Editor. Previous experience helpful. Responsible for soliciting and editing articles and book reviews, planning special supplements. Commitment to feminism and social change. Challenging position in a stimulating environment. Full-time. Low salary, good benefits. Inquiries and resumes to: Managing Editor, *GCN*, 167 Tremont St., Boston, MA 02111. (617) 426-4469.

attitude

Dear friends,

While Northampton women are in the news I want to flush out the picture with some underground views of dykedom in the Paradise Valley.

I spent three summers in Northampton. When I say this today many a lesbian sister responds: "Northampton! What was your experience if that community?!"

In conversation I've heard lots of tales of outrage. The general idea being some women from around there seem caught in a 'better than' myth — their act is tough, chauvinist, or stridently pe where rules of correctness originate, unquestionably, at the center of the universe, Northampton, of course.

Let me pick out a few to illustrate. There's the one about the Northampton woman who crashed the apartment of a sister in Gainesville she had never met before. Besides generally treating the pad as rightful if inferior accommodation for a travelling V.I.P., the Northampton woman apparently picked up, examined and, in most cases, incorrectly replaced, all items on the sister-wimons' altar. A musician told me of the night her band played a women's dance in the Valley and someone mentioned in passing some gig they'd done where men were present. "You play for men!" rejoined one prominent community woman loudly — within half an hour the place had cleared out. A guy I know tried to live in Northampton while his girlfriend was at school, only he'd never encountered so much hostile viing from women on the street and he couldn't stand it very long.

Personally I enjoyed my time in the area, and met several wonderful women, yet odd things did happen. I think if our household had been less self-sufficient I would have pained for want of community. Only in Northampton has a sister sneered at me for being into rock music; there I experienced one very sharp example of contrast between the words of a certain, supposedly full-hearted, non-classist, feminist, etc. academician and her practical treatment of one tradeswoman; and I heard the crazy details of how fisty-cuffs broke out between folk at Womanfyr Books and a woman carpenter hired to fix the store. These are my contributions to the nationwide grapevine on this subject. We wish the community maximum strength and best wishes in struggle against regional facists, we just don't get the attitude.

Sincerely,
M. Clad
Atlanta, GA

run around

Dear GCN,

I am responding in reference to the Cambridge Women's Center's denial for usage of the Center by the Women's S/M Support Group. Although I am not an avid supporter of the beliefs of S/M, I do believe that this group has a right to be a part of the Center. Baltimore has recently formed a similar group and they did not meet with this kind of resistance and hull. The Lesbian S/M Support Group here is a part of the G.C.C.B. (Gay Community Center of Baltimore), as it should be.

The response by the C.W. Center sounds like the proverbial run around. A "community center" should bring its people together, not be judgmental and separatist. The group has proven that they are sincere. And let's face it, S/M is a part of every community all over, even Bostonians.

To the wimons group in question I admire your perseverance and togetherness. To the C.W. Center, you have to decide who you are there for; every woman or just a chosen few.

Sincerely,
Susan Gunn
Co-chairperson Baltimore Gay and Lesbian Switchboard
Baltimore, MD

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nambla/s&m

Dear People:

First, let me apologize for not presenting this in typed form as you request: my "typer" is in the shop and requires massive monetary transfusions before it will be released into my custody again. Please understand, and I promise to keep my writing (rather, "printing") legible.

Second, I have enclosed a small (*sigh*) contribution. I felt it more important to respond to recent issues quickly and hence the hand-written letter — my typer can wait: my feelings need to be expressed now, before the impetus fails, (and ire recedes).

On my agenda of comments, I want to direct attention to the fact that the ongoing controversy involving the Cambridge Women's Center and the S/M support group is indicative of the most militant 'blindness' I've witnessed besides the NAMBLA controversy. What we're being told here is that support can only be extended to those who agree with "Ones in Power" (an S/M relationship?) while people involved in "P.I." activity will please kindly step to the back of the bus: we don't want to 'see' the evidence of your existence (your difference) and have to face any reality we can't cope with emotionally or intellectually. "No, thanks, ladies — I'll just keep this blindfold securely in place, okay?"

Sorry, people: it's not gonna go away just because you can't deal with it. We've come too far to climb back into the closet now. To the women who put their names (and hearts) to the letter headed "still discussing" in the April 9th issue (No. 37): thank you. I wish I had a place to offer you. I can only give my verbal support and hope somebody comes to their senses and starts taking care of business. No surrender without consent!

(Whew!) Next, I want to extend my pride, gratitude and appreciation to *GCN* for running "Consent: What Is It?" and "It Is Us Against Them!" in the April 16th issue, and of course to the authors of both pieces also. I agree 100% with Mr. McClintock on the point that age of consent cases should be judged individually. That's one of the main reasons I joined NAMBLA in the first place; I don't believe that any bureaucracy, state or federal, has the ability (or the right) to decide what an appropriate age of consent is. Young people aren't "allowed" to disengage from harmful and abusive "family" environments; so many times I've personally witnessed runaways forcibly returned to the parents who beat them into leaving in the first place. These are 'laws to protect "children"'? Gimme a break! It's violence, pure and simple. Rape is not sex, it's violence; child abuse is not protection, it's violence. These situations occur because women and children aren't "taken seriously" and because they have *no rights* to fight back with.

Sit back and think about a society that promotes violence and denies its citizens outlets for love and affection, and it's easy to understand the FBA harassment of NAMBLA and denial of space for S/M lesbians. Easy to understand, but *impossible* to condone.

Both situations revolve around words and concepts like "power" and "consent" and I think everyone should remember the word that keeps getting lost in the shuffle: "mutual." No one can decide except the persons involved. I've long since stopped expecting anything productive from so-called "objective by-standers;" they invariably seek to impose their own moralistic conditions to the subject at hand.

Enough. More journalistically fluent people have applied themselves to these topics. I just couldn't keep it inside anymore.

In closing, my last words are for Nancy Walker, my favorite Unicorn. In so-called "primitive" societies, the mad people are cherished and revered for their visions of life. Please don't stop sharing those visions with us — we need you. I'm glad your illusions have begun to transformation towards a better understanding for your importance, both for your sake, and for ours. Keep talking, Nancy — we love you.

My thanks to all of you on the *GCN* staff. I'm sorry if this turns out too long to print or too much trouble to put into type. Please convey my love and gratitude to everyone there for allowing me a space to "respond" in.

In struggle in so many ways, love always —

Kiva JS Ries
Los Angeles, CA

OOPS!

Sorry, we got our months mixed up. The Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance Mayoral candidates night is scheduled for May 26th at UMass Boston, Park Square, Room 222, 7:30 pm. Admission free.

Gay Community News

cover design: PLASTIC IMAGE

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NEW YORK DISTRIBUTION

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W. 13th St., New York, N.Y. 10014,

(212) 243-7770.

Gay Community News (GCN) is dedicated

to providing coverage of events and news of

interest to the gay community. *GCN* is pub-

lished every week (except the first week of

January and the last week of August) by a

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ation, Inc., all rights reserved, reprint by

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Second-class postage paid at Boston,

Mass. Annual subscription rate is \$25. ISSN:

0147-0728. Member New England Press

Association, Reporters Committee for Free-

dom of the Press. COSMEP Member.

GCN is included in the Alternative Press

Index, which is published quarterly by the

Alternative Press Center, Inc., Box 7229,

Baltimore, MD 21218.

Volumes 1-9 of *GCN* are available on

microfilm for \$22/volume. Write

GCN/Microfilm for more information.

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Speaking Out

Some Are More Equal Than Others

By Jeffrey Menzer

The recent attempt of gay and lesbian students at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine to have the college formally adopt a policy denying access to the institution's student placement services by an employer which discriminates against any student, is another example of gay and lesbian students' struggle to win equal treatment within post-secondary educational institutions.

The fact that equal treatment is not automatically extended to gay and lesbian students should lead supporters of these institutions to question the sincerity of the institution's commitment to equality, especially an institution which includes "sexual or affectional preference" within its statement of non-discrimination. Generally, one finds that the institution claims—borrowing a phrase from Orwell—that all students are equal, but some students are more equal than others.

Last year, while a senior at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, I too tried to have the Williams administration adopt such a policy; by no coincidence, the Williams' administration used the same strategy as Bates' administration to preclude adoption.

The initial response of an administration to the policy is: "This is an open campus, and all groups, regardless of their position on issues, should be allowed to speak on campus. Our role as an educational institution is to be an open forum for debate." This argument casts the supporters of the policy in the illiberal, and incorrect, role of censors, McCarthyites, fascists, etc.

This argument is not compelling for it fails to recognize the distinction between *advocating* a discriminatory policy, which is protected by the right to free speech, and *practicing* a discriminatory policy, which is not protected by the right to free speech. Unfortunately, it appears that the Bates students fell for this and adopted a strategy which lost the group the diverse support it had.

Gay-Straight Alliance President Phillip Crawford should not have suggested inviting the KKK to campus as a means of testing the administration's commitment to free speech, for it legitimated the administration's attempt to turn the issue into one of free speech when it clearly is one of stopping an action which should not be protected by the college.

Crawford was correct, however, in contrasting the college's treatment of gay and lesbian students with their treatment of women, people of color, and other special population groups. All federally funded education programs (which means virtually all colleges and universities under the current interpretation of the law) are required by law—Title IX, Title VI, Section 504—to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, or physical handicap. Not surprisingly federal law does not prohibit discrimination on the bases of sexual or affectional preference.

Even though the federal government does not yet extend the basic civil rights to lesbian and gay men which it does to other citizens, many local communities have. Williams College is one of the several colleges and universities which include "sexual orientation" within its statements of non-discrimination.

This inclusion is virtually meaningless because it does not compel the institution to extend the guarantees of non-discrimination to gay and lesbian students which it is required by law to guarantee the federally protected student groups. By including "sexual orientation" within its statements, the institution creates the illusion that gay and lesbian students will be treated equally.

(This article does not even begin to discuss the obstacles facing gay and lesbian students whose colleges and universities deny them the right to form a student organization. The government of the State of Florida passed a law last year which prohibited its schools from funding or recognizing gay and lesbian student organizations. Georgetown University students have sued their institution for the right to organize a campus group. While courts in the past have recognized the rights of students to form associations, gay and lesbian students, through administrative or legal means, are being prevented from establishing a political base from which to begin any effective change.)

An administration, trying to deny adoption of a policy similar to Bates', might argue that it is not the agent of discrimination at the student placement service, and therefore not culpable and not responsible for preventing the action. The federal government believes otherwise. The Title IX regulations specifically prohibit the educational institution from assisting (by giving facilities, support staff, etc.) any "agency, organization, or person which discriminates... in its employment practices" §86.38 (a) (2).

The President of Williams College finally recognized the validity of the speech/action distinction, but he then argued that the Office of Career Counselling (the student placement service at Williams) was a tangential part of the college, that it was a "twilight zone," and therefore not compelled to adhere to the college's practices and promises of non-discrimination. Clearly, federal law requires that any group or program which receives services from the educational institution must follow the non-discrimination policy.

The Title IX regulations also recognize the speech/argument distinction. The regulations in no way affect "textbook or curricular materials" (§86.42). In other words, it would not be in violation of the law for a corporation executive to give a speech saying, "All women belong in the bedroom and not in the boardroom," but the college or university could not give the same speaker access to the student placement service if he/she puts words into action and refuses to interview and to hire women.

The extensive regulations address all aspects of educational institutions and seek to make education available to all protected students on an equal basis. Gay and lesbian students have not suffered the systematic exclusion and denial of equal access to educational opportunity, but rather our difficulty has been our treatment within the institution.

In addition to suffering discrimination within the student placement services, other pertinent regulated areas include: health services offered, membership in or appointment to committees, positions of leadership or counselling, student conduct and student punishment, and harassment. In these areas, the regulations should apply equally to all students.

Generally gay and lesbian students need the support of other campus minorities in order to gain rights and privileges. Other currently protected students must assist in extending their protection to all students. These protected students should also be motivated by self-interest, seeking to preserve their currently federally mandated protection, because depending on the Supreme Court ruling on *Grove City Vs. Bell*, these protected students might lose some of their protection.

Currently, if any program of an educational institution receives federal money, including student financial aid, then the Title IX regulations apply equally throughout the institution. However, many opponents of Title IX are seeking to weaken it by arguing that only those specific programs which receive federal money would have to comply.

Under current interpretation of the law, if only the Chemistry department receives a federal grant to do a specific research project, the entire institution must comply with Title IX; however, the Supreme Court might rule later this year that in that instance, only that specific research project would have to comply with the Title IX regulations. If the Court interprets the law as program specific, the latter example, then the currently protected students will lose their protection, and they then will be in the same position which gay and lesbian students are now in. Will their educational institutions maintain these protections without federal mandate?

The problem facing gay and lesbian students at post-secondary educational institutions, especially ones which include "sexual orientation" in their non-discrimination clauses, is that their rights are not delineated as are those of other students. Gay and lesbian students have the right to know what rights they have, what recourse is available to them,

and what to expect from the institution they give their money to. Most other students won at least a statement of their rights when the federal government delineated them and compelled the institutions to comply.

Gay and lesbian students are currently dependent on the whims and largesse of the administration. They are forced to accept an absurd argument like the one which places the student placement service in the "twilight zone" for gay and lesbian students, but under college regulation for all other students. They are forced to accept unequal treatment from an institution which is seen as one of the major agents of equality within our society.

Gay and lesbian students should be included in the existing, pertinent Title IX regulations by their educational institutions. Unfortunately, this simple desire for equal treatment will not be easily granted.

While the objective is clear, the strategies to realize it are not. Inclusion will depend not on the federal government's wielding its power, but on the isolated political situation within each educational institution and on the political skills of the gay and lesbian students.

Colleges and universities change policies not because the students demand it, but because external constituencies exert their influence. Many schools became co-educational because alumni wanted their daughters (and sons) to be able to attend their alma mater. Gay rights activist Leonard Matlovich said: "The next generation of gay people, they are our children and we have to take care of them, because no one else will."

We must begin to use our power as gay and lesbian alumni. We should tell the institution that we do not like their treatment of their gay and lesbian students when we send in our contribution; or withhold our contribution and services to the institution until their policies change. Student groups must begin to utilize the gay and lesbian alumni network. We should tell them who we are. Student groups must also begin to communicate with one another to develop model strategies. We as gay and lesbian alumni can successfully use our influence within our nation's colleges and universities to guarantee equal treatment for all students.

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CASPAR

Women's Alcoholism Program Helps Lesbians

By Maida Tilchen

"CASPAR is offering women a non-threatening environment in which to deal with the issues of alcohol and drugs in their lives. It is a gift from the community of women who have built that program, and that gift exists within a tradition of women helping and building services for women. I am always honored to be part of letting a broader community know that such services exist, particularly in the Cambridge and Somerville area."

These are the words of musician Margie Adam, who recently did a benefit concert for the Women's Alcoholism Program of the Cambridge and Somerville Program for Alcoholism Rehabilitation, Inc. (CASPAR). The CASPAR Women's program is well-known and highly-regarded in the local women's community. As CASPAR therapist Cheryl Qamar told me, "There's been a mutual support between the lesbian community and the program and I appreciate the lesbians who have helped us with referrals and good words for the program."

CASPAR's services include outpatient counseling, for both individuals and groups, and are for both the recovering alcoholic and their families and friends. They also run a residential home for recovering alcoholics called "Womanplace." The women's services grew out of the existing CASPAR program in 1975, when Norma Finkelstein was a social worker for CASPAR. Norma was disturbed by the lack of attention given to women in the alcoholism program. She felt that women had different issues in their lives than men that were not being met by a program that served both groups together, often at the expense of women.

For example, at the time there were three half-way houses for men, and none for women. Norma was able to get a grant from the National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to begin the program that has developed into the current services of the Women's Alcoholism Program, of which Norma is now the director. Recently, the service acquired a new home, a pleasant three-story "family" type house near Cambridge City Hospital, with a friendly, non-clinical atmosphere.

The Women's Alcoholism Program is not connected to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), but it is clear that the two programs have much interaction. As Norma explained to me, "AA is an international self-help organization. This is a funded treatment program. We are not self-help, although we have helped to generate self-help groups, particularly women's chapters of AA locally. Our treatment is individual counseling, which AA doesn't do. We do not work strictly on the "12 steps" of AA. We help women get sober and refer them to AA. We do a lot of individual work with families. Not everybody needs our services. They may go to AA and do fine, but some people don't want to go to AA for some reason, or they may need something else, so they come to us. It may be that they aren't ready to admit they have a drinking problem, and just want to explore that with us."

"We also have another population of women who have been sober for a while in AA, who come to us because they are ready to look at other aspects of their lives, by seeing a counselor who can help them look at themselves within the context of alcoholism."

We also see a lot of children of alcoholic parents."

The counselors in the program may use various therapeutic methods, but they do not use aversion therapy or chemical methods of treating alcoholism. Fees are sliding scale and no one is denied treatment because of an inability to pay.

The CASPAR program has been concerned with providing services and outreach to lesbians since its inception. Cheryl Qamar, who is an openly lesbian counselor, is currently running two groups for lesbians. One is for women in an early stage of sobriety. Another is a personal growth group for women who are sober. It allows them to work on other issues in their lives, not centering on alcoholism, but integrated with it.

Services to lesbians with alcoholism problems have been generally inadequate and even destructive at many other agencies. Professionals who work in the alcoholism field may be homophobic and insensitive to lesbian (and gay male) clients. Many such professionals believe that alcoholism is caused by emotional problems, and are quick to blame homosexuality. As a result, a woman who informs an alcoholism counselor about her lesbianism may find she is being "cured" of homosexuality instead of being treated for alcoholism. According to a 1978 paper by Cade W., who helped found the Washington, D.C., chapter of AA, the result can be fatal. "Our difficulty as gay alcoholics is not that we are homosexual. Instead, our difficulty lies in the area of communication. An ancient barrier of incomprehension makes communication between homosexual alcoholics and

the profession of alcoholism treatment often just about impossible. Hundreds of thousands of homosexual alcoholics do not come to treatment today because they fear they will be rejected as homosexual. Even most of those who do come for help rarely communicate fully with the professional, or for that matter in AA either—because of this fear. Again and again, homosexual alcoholics are dying because this communications barrier cuts them off from effective treatment. And because of this, I think it is fair to say that a higher proportion of gay alcoholics than so-called normal alcoholics die of alcohol-related causes."

Statements such as that certainly emphasize the importance of the Women's Alcoholism Program of CASPAR. In conjunction with the lesbian and gay AA groups in this area, they are providing a supportive environment for lesbian women with alcohol-related problems. The program does outreach to the community through flyers, word of mouth, and by advertising in GCN and local women's publications. They also do training for lesbian and gay service groups. I was somewhat disturbed, however, that there was no mention of services for lesbians on any of the information available at their office. My impression is that they are known to women who have contact with the feminist women's community and the local women's bars and other non-political groups, but I did feel concerned that an isolated lesbian might not know that there are services specific to lesbians available.

The program has had conflicts between straight and lesbian residents at their halfway house, but

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Salmagundi: Pomposity, Ignorance, and Prejudice

**Homosexuality: Sacrilege,
Vision, Politics**

A special double issue of
Salmagundi, (No. 58-59, Fall 1982-Winter 1983)
Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
1982, 426 pp., \$7.00

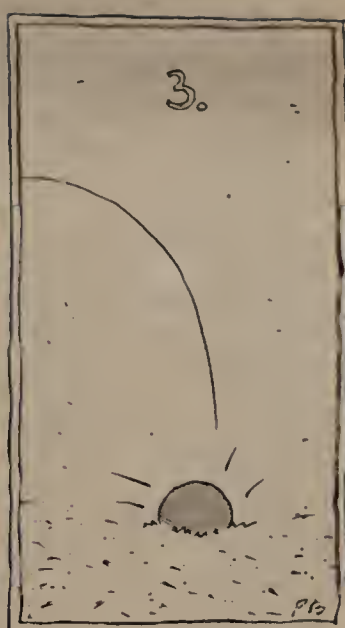
Reviewed by David J. Thomas

The heavies are moving in. Nearly two years ago when *Salmagundi*, a reputable Eastern college quarterly, announced a forthcoming special issue devoted to homosexuality, it raised some eager anticipation. The prospective authors included eminences, worthies, established writers. The result, a 426-page tome, is a stunning disappointment and worse. One might have guessed what was to come from the title, *Homosexuality: Sacrilege, Vision, Politics*: pretentiousness cubed. Anthologies are invariably a mixed lot. This one, with some exceptions, lacks any compelling theme or insight and is united mainly by its pomposity, ignorance, and prejudice.

How does this book fail? Let me count the ways. It almost entirely avoids lesbian experience. (Jill Johnston's maundering recollections are a not very helpful exception.) It is word heavy. There is a tediousness and crabbed preciousness to most of the essays by the literati and this stain spreads. Concurrently there is a total neglect of the important connections between homosexuality and art, fashion, dress, theater, television, films. The representation from academic disciplines is highly skewed with many important ones missing. Moreover, the particular disciplinary spectacles often prove to be blinders. One could not even infer from this book that there are tens of thousands of lesbians and gay men working in hundreds of groups and organizations, taking shared responsibility for our lives, exploring new modes of human relations, and building community.

The book includes pieces by openly gay writers and, mostly, *avowedly* non-gay authors. Hopeful. Perhaps the editors sought to promote dialogue? Not at all. The gay writers occupy the autobiographical ghetto and a few suburban outposts, while in the critical sections on politics and literature, which fill nearly half the volume, nary an open gay voice is heard. Is this relevant? Yes.

Here it is important to be clear. Discussion of matters gay is not and should not be for gays alone. That is no sounder a view than that only Christians can discuss Christianity or only Nazis Nazism. There are truths accessible to all as are our claims to justice; gay liberation is a public phenomenon and all in the public may comment, others may see things we miss—we too are prone to err in our own favor, and while gay liberation must be primarily the work of gays themselves, it is no less true that we need allies. For all these reasons we *need* dialogue with non-gays, but non-gays, even those with academic pretensions, need to know what they are talking about. It is not enough to read a few books, run them through one's disciplinary word processor, and spew out an article. What is so disturbingly missing in almost all these essays, other than the autobiographical, is that what matters behind the fictions, discourses, ideologies are



Paul Brouillette

the lives, hurts, confusions, and struggles of real people. Also missing is some decent modesty in face of this complex conundrum which none of us understands.

Let us examine the section on "Politics," which might interest readers of *GCN*, marked for its "humorless and often grudging seriousness" by Spiegelman in his article on Gay Journalism. Spiegelman actually tries to be fair and has read up a bit on his topic. He even mentions Stonewall, almost uniquely in this volume. Yet he has trouble getting beyond the pink section of the *Advocate* and can't figure out what the gay press is up to. Had he not ignored the community boosting and building locals like the *Washington Blade*, San Francisco's *Coming Up*, *B.A.R.*, and *Sentinel*, and a dozen others, he might have gotten a clue.

Fairness, though, is not for Jean Bethke Elshtain in "Homosexual Politics: The Paradox of Gay Liberation," one of the anthology's most offensive pieces. Using the worst polemical tricks of her trade (political theory—it's mine, too, so I know them), tendentiously selecting quotations, suppressing contrary views, ignoring historical context, she sets up a crude caricature of the gay liberationist position and then self-righteously and with a parade of learning knocks it down. Brava Elshtain, such courage!

After this shoddy piece one turns hopefully to E. Moberly's "Homosexuality: Restating the Conservative Case." After all, a good conservative is hard to find, and the well-stated conservative case, so rare, is helpful. Moberly's case, though, is warmed over Bieber and Socarides plus condescending Christian compassion leading to new conversion therapy! With astonishing arrogance she seeks even to redefine the language in the interests of her asserted, not demonstrated, theory with no discussion of counter claims and evidence or acknowledgement that her view has been officially repudiated by the American Psychiatric Association. Falwell is preferable to this.

On and on. Why did the editors allow Arno Karlen simply to vent his spleen in what purports to be a review of two books about lesbians? Another grudge piece is Bartley's self-important "Wittgenstein" (in the "Long View" section) where he torturously argues that Wittgenstein, as he had previously published, was homosexual, that he wasn't a very original philosopher, that his homosexuality isn't relevant to his philosophy anyhow, but that it was a major reason why Bartley's detractors were attracted to Wittgenstein in the first place! This is embarrassing.

Oddly enough, the one worthwhile essay in the "Politics" section is Herbert Blau's "Disseminating Sodom." The oddity is that while Blau is completely caught up in the trendy pseudo-profundities of post-structuralist, deconstructionist discourse on discourse, translated from French, a near impenetrable

academic vocabulary, his intelligence, thoughtfulness, and wit (finally!) keep breaking through. (Imagine 400+ pages on homosexuality virtually without wit. This is no gay book.) Blau even seems to know homosexual persons and what they are up to and up against. He grasps the deep ambivalences of our lives, the swift recent, disconcerting changes, and the complexities of a politics where similarities and differences are viewed and valued differently not only outside but also within the gay world. Perhaps because he is a man of the theater, Blau understands much of the gay problematic. The writing is perverse, but perseveres.

Even on literature, their home terrain, the editors do little better. Philip Rieff's serious and substantial but inflated essay on Oscar Wilde has been printed before. In a silly article, Martin Green addresses the vexed question of homosexual sensibility and identifies it with dandyism whether the authors are homosexual or not! Forster? Isherwood?

The most morally squalid piece in the entire volume, on Genet, is by one Larry Nachman, identified as "a regular contributor to *Salmagundi*." Now here is a heavy. He stuns with such insights as, "Homosexuality has been without form." Nachman has read Genet. He disapproves. He has read Tripp. A doctor has told him that "what is not in doubt is a level of promiscuity [among male homosexuals, presumably, but he fails to say] that may eclipse that of female prostitutes." He notes the "persistent and recurring" "association of homosexuality, aestheticism, and the embrace of violence." This witches brew "is that final conversion of man to a mere instrument against which Kant warned and which totalitarian regimes attempt to realize." Mr. Nachman! It was *homosexuals* who were put to death by the scores of thousands in concentration camps by the Nazis, after they butchered their own S.A., not the other way around. This is equivalent to blaming the Jews for the triumph of Nazism. The piece is not drivel, it is despicable.

On the other hand, Robert Alter's brisk, concise, lucid essay on Proust disagrees courteously but firmly with what some may take to be Rivers' "ideologically correct" gay reading of Proust. Whether Alter persuades or not is irrelevant. He argues cogently, cleanly, and fairly. His is one of the few solid voices here which invites dialogue.

One cannot claim that all the openly gay writers avoid the besetting sin of this miscellany, its mannered pretentiousness already proffered by co-editor George Steiner "In Lieu of a Preface." The headlined interview with Foucault is not particularly interesting because the magister magisterially declines to answer a number of the important questions, and some silly ones, put to him by the interviewer. Paul

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The Puzzle Palace A Report on America's Most Secret Agency

By James Bamford
Houghton Mifflin
New York
1982, 436 pp., \$16.95

The National Security Agency is America's super-secret intelligence organization. It is both larger and more highly funded than the CIA. Its network of listening posts, computers and personnel monitor and decode communications around the world. Bamford's book is the first written exploring our most hidden government agency. That makes it important enough, of course. But Bamford also details two significant incidents at the NSA involving gays.

The first occurred in 1960 when two NSA cryptographers, Bernon F. Mitchell and William H. Martin, defected to the Soviet Union, creating the worst security breach in U.S. government history. Mitchell, a native of northern California, and Martin, who grew up in Ellensburg, Washington, were apparently lovers. Both were bright young men with aptitudes for mathematics and cryptanalysis. Both joined the NSA in 1957 and lived in separate residences in the NSA company town of Laurel, Maryland.

According to Bamford, Martin and Mitchell became increasingly shocked by American incursions into Soviet air space for reconnaissance missions. They believed it dangerous and provocative, risking World War III. They brought their concerns to Congressman Wayne Hays, who did nothing. Disenchanted, Martin and Mitchell defected, telling their story to international journalists in Moscow.

Shocked by the defection, the U.S. government began an immediate inquiry. In its report the House Un-American Activities Committee concluded that the major reason for the defection was homosexuality. At no time did they seriously consider Martin's and Mitchell's political reasons and fears of war as possible deeper motivations for the defections. Spurred by the HUAC report, the NSA launched a massive



purge, ousting a total of 26 "deviates." Yet in their manic search for homosexuals in the NSA, reports Bamford, they overlooked Sgt. Jack E. Dunlap, who had a wife, a mistress, five children and who was highly paid by the KGB. He would sell secrets to the Russians for three years until he was discovered and committed suicide.

The second bit of gay history from *The Puzzle Piece* is more recent. In July, 1980, it was discovered that a NSA linguist was probably a homosexual. Instead of resigning as expected when confronted by a supervisor, the employee contacted Franklin Kannney, a gay rights advocate and veteran of many security clearance battles. Kannney in turn called the NSA supervisor and advised him that there would be no resignation and the case would be fought exhaustively and with the greatest amount of publicity possible. The agency, ever sensitive to any publicity, reinstated the employee and restored his clearance. The employee, however, had to promise to tell his family of his homosexuality and that he would not succumb to blackmail.

This decision represents a major step forward for gays. Not only did it undercut the intense tradition of anti-gay prejudice which had arisen from the Martin/Mitchell incident at the NSA, but also it was a considerable step toward eliminating discrimination against gays throughout the American intelligence community. If the super-secret NSA allowed gays to be employed, then it is difficult to maintain anti-gay discrimination in lesser agencies like the CIA, FBI and the myriad of other government security offices. And, perhaps more important, it attests to the possible success of fighting back.

— Marshall R. McClintock
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Water Dancer
by Jenifer Levin
Poiseidon Press
New York
1982, 368 pp., \$15.95

Although I can be as driven as the next person, I find it hard to understand why anyone at all would want to do what all the characters in *Water Dancer* feel is the only activity which makes life meaningful—swimming. Now when these characters say "swimming," they don't mean what you or I might mean by it. We are talking here about the kind of long-distance swimming where you have to break the ice crust to get into the water in the first place, and then proceed to swim through huge, freezing waves, vomiting from sea-sickness, experiencing horrible hallucinations, and emerging beaten, semi-conscious, and ten or fifteen pounds lighter than when you started twenty-five or thirty hours earlier.

While *Water Dancer* didn't make me want to go out and become a long-distance swimmer (at least in mountain climbing there's the thrill of getting to the top of the mountain), it did allow me to enter, totally and very convincingly, into the world of people who do it. I have no idea if Levin's portrait of this world is accurate, but that isn't the point anyway. She creates a believable world and immerses us in it.

Like the sport itself, the style of this book is quite strange, and very different from most women's writing. *Water Dancer* is written in a terse Hemingway-esque style which really shouldn't work, but somehow manages to. Male or female, the characters' speech, even on ground, sounds like they're conserving their breath for the swim. Take this first meeting between Dorey, the champion swimmer who is the main character, and Anne, her "pacer" (the one who is tossed into the water to swim alongside the distance swimmer when she seems to be giving out).

"Hi there." Dorey slid from her elbows to sit cross-legged in one plain, easy motion. Her face was unguarded, pleasant, and without malice.

Sarge watched. Anne dug up one of those smiles that illuminated rooms. She nodded at Dorey and approached calmly, arm outstretched, hand angled down. "I'm pleased," she said, "to meet you."

Dorey smiled back. "Good." She didn't hesitate to reach up, offer her own hand openly. "That's good."

(p. 121)

Continued on Book Review page 6

In Thrall
By Jane deLynn
Clarkson/Potter
New York
1982, 250 pp., \$13.95

The advertisements for *In Thrall* say that the novel is credible, but incredible is closer to the truth. We meet Lynn as a sixteen-year-old high school senior whose major concern is whether she will be accepted into Radcliffe. She has four friends, three girls and a boy, and the action takes place sometime during John Kennedy's presidential administration; more specific than that we don't get. The second principle character is Lynn's English teacher, Miss Maxfeld, who at the beginning of the school year invokes anxiety attacks in Lynn. After longing stares and snappy after-school conversation, Lynn is invited for tea. Soon after that they begin an affair. As the year, and the affair, progress, Lynn continues to date her boyfriend, continues to worry about Radcliffe, and continues to be a self-styled "monster" of precocity. The affair is discovered when her cousin Leonard, a suspected "homo" himself, betrays Lynn's confidence in order to cover his own tracks. Naturally Lynn is forbidden to see Miss Maxfeld again, and since it is time to graduate, her parents decide to send her to Europe for the summer before going to college (not Radcliffe, as it turns out). Miss Maxfeld is not fired because a hearing would have aired the dirty laundry and Lynn's parents couldn't stand for that.

When I read the dust jacket for this book, I was excited, thinking that maybe some of my own experiences with crushes on teachers were going to be explored, but instead we learn more about the needs, insecurities and desires of Lynn's three girlfriends than we do of Lynn.

Problems abound in this book aside from the thematic ones. We see Lynn float through her activities as though someone were pulling her along, and in spite of our being told how miserable she is, we never know why. The reader never gets a feel for the pain or confusion Lynn tells us she is going through. DeLynn overwrites each passage of self-consciousness, goes off on tan-



gents, and uses too much slang and lingo, giving a misleading sense of an adolescent's way of thinking and talking.

All through the book Lynn makes it clear what she thinks of homosexuality: "the Land of Undifferentiated Slime," "a disease." Unlike other women or characters from that time period who may have been sleeping with women but didn't consider themselves lesbians because lesbians were child molesters, moustached or crewcutted, Lynn immediately identifies with that as her future. Even though she has no moustache and Miss Maxfeld has no crewcut, Lynn sees no other options. At the end, in their final scene, Lynn is alternately bored and "enthralled" by Miss Maxfeld and the spell she casts. In a change of tense, Lynn says to the reader, "You tell me why I should ever want to leave it." A surprising question from one so appalled at the prospect of moustached and crewcutted women as her future companions.

In addition, much of the dialog is without tag lines indicating who said what. While this might suggest distinct personalities among the characters, quite the opposite is true; most of the dialog could be said by all the same person, be it Lynn and her girlfriends or Lynn and Miss Maxfeld. The girls' precocity and Miss Maxfeld's intellect all sound alike. Lynn is a character we have no sympathy for, and Miss Maxfeld lacks personality, individuality and anything that could be powerful enough to seduce a young student. To say the least, I was not enthralled by this book.

—Diane Hamer

The Gay of Cooking



by the Kitchen Fairy
illustrations by David Gaines
Fairy Publications
P.O. Box 450, Laguna Beach, CA 92652
1982, 187 pp.

Leafing through *The Gay of Cooking* is a little like being breezed back twenty years when "camp" meant something you did around the living room with your fag friends and not someplace that the Chiltern Mountain Club and Dykes on Hikes go on weekends. For better or worse, "camping" has been slowly leaving gay male life and becoming a thing of the past. That makes a book like *The Gay of Cooking*—a camp extravaganza—look not so much outdated as somewhat charmingly anachronistic. They just don't write books like this anymore and, though it may cause some nostalgia, you can see why.

The Gay of Cooking resembles the 1965 *The Gay Cookbook* by Lou Rand, who for many years wrote a

food column in *The Advocate*. There are recipes here, but they are nothing extraordinary. (The inexperienced cook would do better to go to *The Joy of Cooking* or *The New York Times Cookbook*.) It seems that the whole reason this book exists is solely to make witty (?), campy, or dishy—if you will—comments about the food: "Beef Stroke Me Off"—"An elegant dinner you can pull off in no time (not to be confused with beef jerky!)" "Poke Chops"—"When it comes to a good poke in the chops, even I can get piggy"; "Hot Greek Shrimp"—"When your date's a shrimp, Greek it!"

Come to think about it, it's easy to see why "camp" is dying out.

In its favor the book does have a plastic cover, so if it is used in the kitchen it can be wiped clean, and it has a ring binding, allowing it to lie flat (which is actually a great help in a cookbook). It is not as good as *The Gay Cookbook* (long since out of print), but it's miles better than the execrable *Dinner For Two* published last year by Gay Sunshine Press.

Perhaps the kindest thing to say is that *The Gay of Cooking* is a curiosity for only the truly curious.

—Michael Bronski

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REVIEW

Coming Out... Suspensefully

Mrs. Porter's Letter

by Vicki P. McConnell

Naiad Press

P.O. Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302

1982, 210 pp., \$6.95

Reviewed by Nancy Walker

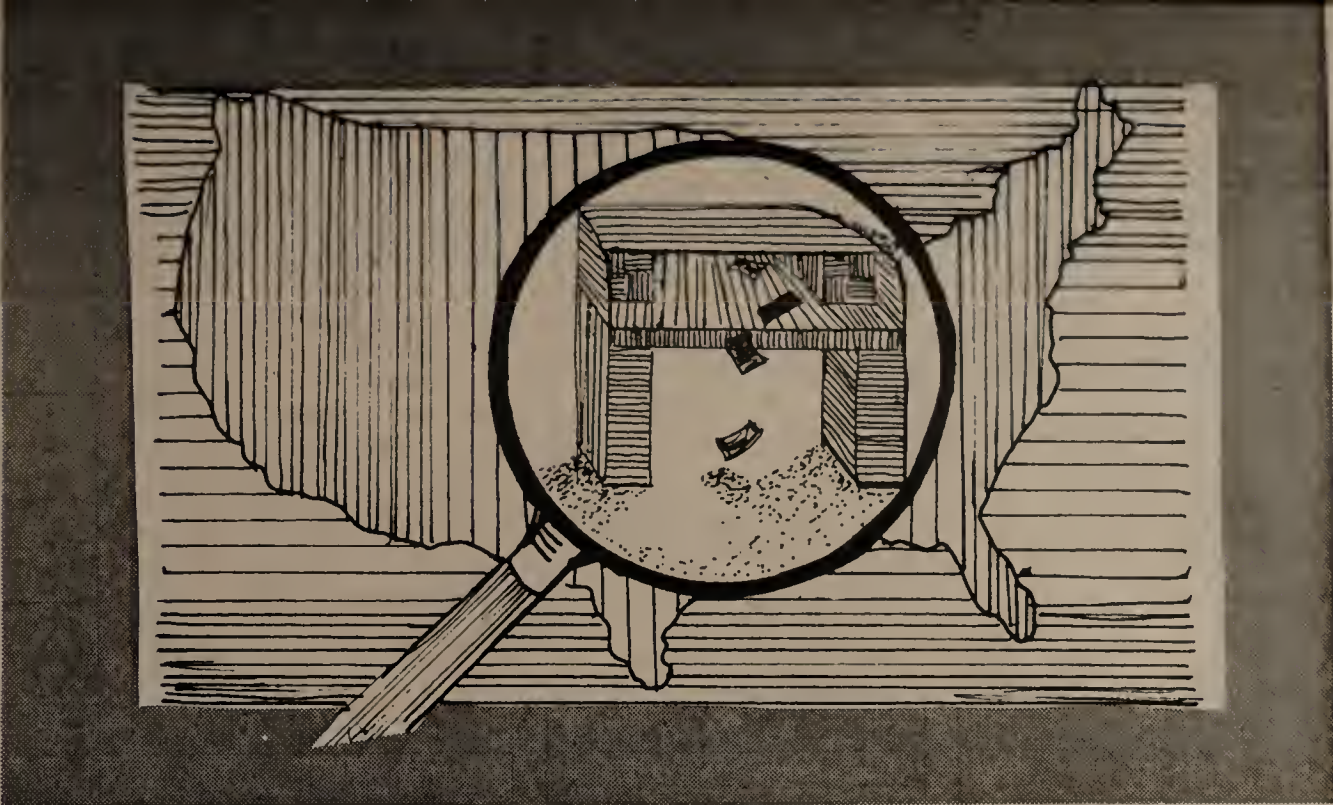
Every once in a great while a book comes along that makes you want to sing. Vicki P. McConnell's *Mrs. Porter's Letter* is such a book. McConnell weaves a deliciously intricate plot and subplot together to form a beautifully crafted, integrated whole. The novel is billed as "a lesbian mystery," which it certainly is, but it is also a pro-feminist coming-out story, and the story of a close and touching friendship between Nyla Wade, the "detective," and Audrey Louise, a super-straight, married mother of three sons.

Nyla is beginning her career as a writer, and she buys a very special antique oak roll-top desk which once belonged to Cybil Porter of the Rochester, NY, Porters, one of that city's first families. Upon examining it, Nyla finds that jostling during delivery has loosened a packet of letters concealed inside the desk.

Spellbound, she reads the letters and seems unable to view them as mere curiosities. All except one are written to Cybil and signed by "W. Stone." The other letter is written to Stone by Cybil. Nyla can't seem to pull herself away from the nagging wonder about why that letter was never sent. She becomes so emotionally involved in her imagination's reconstruction of the love affair between Stone and Cybil, who was married to someone else, that she appears to have no choice but to pursue the question. Cybil, her son and her husband are all dead by this time, though Cybil's death has not been so very many years ago, and since that is the case, might it not be possible for W. Stone to still be alive? Nyla is so intrigued by this idea that she determines to find Stone and present him with Cybil's last letter.

Only a brilliant writer could make even a slightly sophisticated reader buy the notion that a sane, intelligent woman would spend all her time, money and energy chasing after such a chimera. Ms. McConnell's extraordinary skill casts the same magic net over the reader as it does over Nyla Wade. Somehow, it is all quite believable.

Nyla has fallen for the desk and for the two lovers whose letters were sheltered by that noble piece of



L Severance

furniture. The fact that Nyla is living in Denver doesn't prevent her from traveling to Rochester and eventually to Jacksonville, Florida, in her odyssey. All the while Audrey Louise is as supportive, helpful and loving as she can be, lending money and sharing, long distance, in all the details.

It is apparent to the reader that the true love of Nyla's life up to the point of her buying the desk has been Audrey Louise, and this despite the fact that Nyla had been married and is, as the story begins, trying to sort out her life after being divorced.

Shortly after the purchase of the desk, Nyla begins to receive mysterious phone calls in the wee hours of the morning from a woman who simply asks, "Nyla Wade?" and hangs up. Sara, the woman who makes the phone calls, later contacts Nyla in person. She wants to use Nyla's writing talent in order to help avenge a brutal murder. (I don't want to reveal too much of the story because, after all, it is a mystery and one which keeps you on the edge of your seat by virtue of the author's artful narrative.)

The larger "mystery" surrounding the letters, the identity of W. Stone and the question of Stone's being alive or dead are very cleverly intertwined with Sara's sub-plot, and it is through her reaction to Sara, a very strong, courageous and attractive lesbian, that Nyla comes to realize her her own true sexual orientation.

Mrs. Porter's Letter is so vividly written that it works like a good movie. The book has all the action

and suspense necessary to hold the attention of any audience, even one that is not usually given to deep philosophical musings, though the book offers more than ample food for thought and has profoundly significant implications.

McConnell's book has all the ingredients needed for a very satisfying literary experience. Not only is it blessed with an entertaining, fast-moving, tidy plot, but it is also extremely well-written. The prose is crystal clear, the tone is always appropriate to the action, and the characters are well-drawn and easily distinguishable from one another. The author is having a good time (and passing it on to us) because she can be sentimental in the love letters, brusque in the action sequences, tender in Nyla's expression of her feelings for Sara, and utterly charming in the description of the time-tested friendship between Nyla and Audrey Louise.

There is something wistful and winning about Nyla Louise. She is not the least bit tough. She's a highly intelligent woman coming to grips with the realities of earning her own living, of making it in a world not quite set up for women to have a fair shake. Nyla is endearing, never silly, often vulnerable. I have taken her to my heart, and look forward to her next adventure.

There is a new breed of lesbian writer coming into prominence, neither pathetic nor defiant, but life-, love- and fun-affirming. Vicki McConnell is such a writer. *Mrs. Porter's Letter* is such a book.

A Passionate Pair

Dreamlovers

By Pete Fisher

Sea Horse Press

307 West 11th St., New York, NY 10014

1983, 222 pp., \$8.95

The Rose Exterminator

By William Carney

Everest House

New York

1982, 317 pp., \$14.95

Reviewed by Michael Bronski

In all the novels written by and for gay men in the last twelve years, passion plays a very small part. The novels of Patricial Nell Warren (*The Front Runner*, etc.) contain some, but it is destroyed by the cloying sentimentality of the archtypical "lady novelist." Larry Kramer's *Faggots* and Andrew Holleran's *Dancer From the Dance* are social critiques and meditations on a lifestyle. John Rechy, who started out being obsessive—a form of passion—about sex, has now decided that he would rather moralize than copulate. I suppose that Edmund White deals with the topic, but all too often you can't see the passion through the prose. These two novels—*Dreamlovers* and *The Rose Exterminator*—deal with passion in differing ways; the first is successful, the second interesting, but less so.

Oscar Wilde has said that life is a tragedy for those who feel and a comedy for those who think. I've always made a point of never disagreeing with Oscar (since he is usually right) but the epigram, when applied to these novels, seems inverted. Take *Dreamlovers*. It is a novel composed of notes, journal entries, and song lyrics, an admittedly (somewhat) autobiographical collection by Pete Fisher. Whatever may or may not be true here does not matter because *Dreamlovers* (like all fiction) is a fantasy; but it is a fantasy of Pete Fisher's fantasies. Fisher is brimming over with passion: his feelings for his lover of many years, his fantasized love affair with William Shatner as Captain Kirk on *Star Trek*, his friendship with the

young marine who works the corner newsstand. In fact, Fisher has so much passion he has to create alter egos to deal with it all.

By breaking away from the usual narrative, Fisher has managed to unleash (in novel form) torrents of feeling. Early in the book he tells us that he has given himself permission to experiment, to feel, to fantasize; and, like the 18th century romantics, the work is ruled by a feeling of recklessness and abandon. If there is a theme running through here, it is the breaking away from inhibitions. At first Pete is afraid of having sex with other men. His lover Marc convinces him that it is alright, and soon we are off in the back-room bars of San Francisco enacting and reacting to once-hidden fantasies. Soon Pete writes a whole novel about his imaginary affair with Captain Kirk, and then sends William Shatner the manuscript. It's a world of no restraints and no holding back.

At counterpoint to all this is the real world, and Fisher is as convincing when he writes about his everyday relationship with Marc (and all the ups and downs a love affair contains), his feelings about his writing, his friends, and the mundane matters of work and daily existence. This all puts the phantasmagorical aspects of the book into relief and makes them all the more potent. Sartre has described all of Genet's novels as masturbatory, and much of *Dreamlovers* could be deemed as such. The differ-

ence here is that so much of the Genet is so personal it seems somewhat inaccessible; we can read it but are never completely drawn into the world. *Dreamlovers* does draw us in; it feels personal but it also allows us to partake in the fantasies. This is because the book is so high on passion (especially sexual passion) that its jubilation and sheer giddiness carries us along with it. More than anything else, it is a comedy, a very funny book about the joys of urban gay male life and, more specifically, about the excitement and boundlessness of the gay imagination.

The Rose Exterminator is a (sort of) mystery set in the S/M world of the mid-'60s. Glenn Symonds, a famous master, is found dead and ritually castrated. His ex-lover Scott plays detective and tries not only to discover the culprit but also the inner secrets of Glenn's emotional life. *The Rose Exterminator* is a retelling of Carney's 1968 novel *The Real Thing*. (This is referred to by many as a classic S/M novel, but I suspect this may be due to a lack of quantity of such works rather than to its quality.) While *The Real Thing* was told as a series of letters from Glenn to his nephew on the art of S/M, *The Rose Exterminator* gives us a look the other way around. Beneath the murder genre and the S/M milieu, Carney is really writing about the nature of human relationships and the endless emotional confusions that

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Vivid Portraits, Difficult Questions



Paul Brouillette

Difficult Women

By David Plante

Atheneum

New York

1982, 173 pp., \$9.95

Reviewed by Stephen McCauley

Immediately after telling an aged and drunken Jean Rhys, author of, among other novels, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, that "for some mad reason" he loves her, David Plante asks himself, "But why do I love her?" In writing of Sonia Orwell, London literary hostess and widow of George, he asks, "Why was I drawn to a woman... who made me feel so isolated and made me question myself body and soul?" Just prior to moving to Oklahoma with colleague Germaine Greer, feminist and author of *The Female Eunuch*, Plante asks, "Why was I so anticipating being... with Germaine whom I knew to be an enormously difficult woman?"

In this memoir of author David Plante's relationships with three strong, independent, and "difficult" women, Plante asks himself many of the questions the reader may have. Unfortunately, however, he falls short of answering them all too often.

David Plante is the critically acclaimed author of eight novels, the best known of which are *The Family*, *The Country*, and *The Woods*, which together

comprise the Francoeur Family novels. While none of Plante's work is exclusively gay, the narrator of the Francoeur novels is an unmarried man of ambiguous sexuality whom one can safely assume is (to quote Christopher Bram in his *Christopher Street* review of *The Woods*) "probably gay." In these three novels, Plante uses an elegantly spare and exacting prose style combined with the narrator's diffidence to create a high degree of emotional and sexual (often homoerotic) tension. What is left unsaid in these books adds to the power and poignancy of Plante's portrait of a family bound and doomed by silence.

In *Difficult Women*, Plante's first work of nonfiction, Plante assumes a pose similar to that of the narrator of the Francoeur novels: he stands at a safe distance from his own probing while exposing those around him in a series of carefully chosen, sometimes beautiful, and often unflattering images. We see Jean Rhys, with whom Plante worked closely in the last years of her life in putting together her autobiography, struggling with senility, drunkenness, and depression, dictating to Plante, trying to complete the story of her life, *Smile Please*. She talks about her youth in Dominica, the role her writing played in her life, her view of her own importance in literature. In a now infamous scene, Plante pulls a drunken Rhys out of a toilet into which she has fallen. Plante has been widely accused of trashing Rhys in his unflattering portrait. He does, however, give some insight into the ways in which Rhys brought out of her suffering some of the most beautiful and distinctive work of this century.

Sonia Orwell fares less well at Plante's hands. She is insulting and vituperative and warm and welcoming by turns. She seems to be either silent or talking nonstop at breakneck speed. Plante's cool objectivity offers little to help understand the motivation behind her behavior. He tells us nothing of her past, her relationship with George, or her own accomplishments.

Germaine Greer, on the other hand, cuts through Plante's detachment with her warmth and fierce commitment. She comes off as the most fully realized character in the book. Plante seems to react and respond to Greer in a way that he doesn't react to the other women.

While these portraits are presented with varying degrees of insight and taste, each does provide an interesting glimpse into the life of a fascinating person. If, however, the book is to have more than mere voyeuristic appeal, it seems to me that Plante should deal with his relationships with the women in an

intelligent and honest manner. He is the thread that runs through each of the portraits and should tie the book together. But because Plante reveals so little of himself, the relationships with the women lack an emotional depth.

There seems to be a lot of confusion about Plante's sexuality. In the January *Harpers*, James Wolcott chided Plante for not coming out (if he is, in fact, gay), while in the *New York Times Book Review* he was referred to as an openly homosexual author. He never really tells us one way or the other but, once again, it is safe to assume that he is *probably* gay. (After all, how many straight college professors invite drag queens they "met in Tulsa" to their student-faculty parties?) Still, the lack of openness about Plante's sexuality left me wondering what exactly he needed or wanted from his relationships with women. Is Germaine so "enormously" difficult because Plante finds himself attracted to her and finds that attraction threatening or because she views him as a "cunt tease" and uses her physical presence in an intentionally assaultive way? When Greer tells Plante he is not going to meet many men "of a particular sex" in Tulsa, he innocently asks, "What sex is that?" Is he denying his homosexuality to her, to the reader, to himself, or is he offended by her comment? In a rather odd scene, Plante and Greer sit together on a sofa holding hands, touching each other often while two "middle-aged men with moustaches (who were) interior decorators and lived together" try to engage Plante in conversation. Plante answers them in monosyllables and remains "attentive to Germaine." Is his physical display of affection for Greer genuine or is it prompted by his desire to dissociate himself from the two obviously gay men?

These questions, like those which Plante asks himself, remain largely unanswered. The oblique narrative point-of-view which works so well in Plante's fiction here left me feeling unsatisfied. The portraits of the women are vivid and many of the images are remarkable and memorable: Jean Rhys in a wide-brimmed pink hat sitting on a red sofa in the pink lobby of a cheap London hotel drinking sweet vermouth, Germaine Greer driving through a blizzard in Texas eating licorice and drinking champagne, Sonia Orwell putting in order Plante's rustic house in rural Italy. Still, in his safely omniscient perch, Plante seems to subordinate honesty and fairness to the three women to his artistry. Should he not deal as unsparingly with himself as he does with his three "difficult" women?

Defiantly Auden

W.H. Auden: A Biography

By Humphrey Carpenter

Houghton Mifflin

New York

1983, 495 pp., \$10.95

Reviewed by Duncan Mitchell



During the week that I spent reading this book I carried it around with me, and I was surprised to discover how many of the college undergraduates I know had no idea who W.H. Auden was; even those who had heard of him usually had never read any of his poetry. For the benefit, then, of those readers to whom Auden is at best one more famous queer: during the 1930s Auden was a widely-read and influential poet, thanks largely to such poems on political subjects as "Spain 1937" and "September 1, 1939." He was, in fact, the poet of the young, seen as a leader by many of his contemporaries, much as the Beatles and Bob Dylan were in the 1960s. But many of his non-political lyrics also became famous, such as "Lullaby" ("Lay your sleeping head, my love") and "Musée des Beaux Arts" ("About suffering they were never wrong, / The Old Masters"). When he died in 1973, he was arguably the greatest living poet in England. By then he had renounced "political" poetry and made himself irrelevant from that point of view, but he had never been an activist anyhow. He had been at most a journalist, and for those pre-television days a media star: when he and Christopher Isherwood decided to remain in the United States during World War II, there was controversy in the *Daily Mail* and confusion in Parliament (for details see page 291 of Carpenter's book). At about the same time he re-embraced the Anglican Christianity of his childhood, and religion became the ideology he expounded in his verse. Later he collaborated with his "husband," Chester Kallman, an opera librettist—most notably *The Rake's Progress* for

Humphrey Carpenter's biography is the second major life of Auden to see print in the last few years (the other is Charles Osborne's *W.H. Auden: the life of a poet*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979). Auden was one of those people like W. Somerset Maugham who attempt to obstruct biographers by requesting friends to burn their letters—a request which was, naturally, for the most part as disregarded in Auden's case as it was in Maugham's. "He was also (he said) opposed in principle to the publication of, or quotation from, a writer's letters after his death, which he declared was just as dishonourable as reading someone's private correspondence while he was out of the room" (Carpenter, p. xv). In practice, however, Auden (like Maugham) loved gossip and didn't mind reading the biographies and published letters of other writers. For that matter, Neville Coghill, who tutored Auden in English literature at Oxford, once "arrived at his rooms to find Auden already there, reading one of Coghill's letters" (p. 54). Auden looked up and said, "Ah, you're here. Good. What have you done with the second page of this letter?" (quoted by Osborne, p. 40). Later on, "Auden's friends found their drawers being rifled for any letters suitable for inclusion" in a projected three-volume study of schoolboy and collegiate homosexuality (Carpenter, p. 78). While Carpenter's is not an authorized biography, he did have access to Auden's papers, and got interviews and other help from the poet's family. If this makes voyeurs of the biographer and his readers, we are after all only following in the Master's footsteps.

Auden's homosexuality, which was an open secret during most of Auden's life and about which he cautiously became more open in later years. The details Carpenter supplies should satisfy all but the most jaded: Auden's technical preferences (fellatio—a word Carpenter inexplicably insists on italicizing—and occasional light S/M) and Chester Kallman's (Chester liked to be fucked, preferably by trade), Auden's insecurities about his looks and the size of his cock, and the age at which Auden was circumcised (seven). There is also copious information about Auden's loves, including the relationship with Chester, which Auden himself considered a marriage "with all its boredom and rewards" (p. 258), as well as Auden's forays into the mysterious twilight world between the sexes of heterosexuality. (Happily, Carpenter—unlike some reviewers of his book in the straight press—is not inclined to crow overmuch about these latter; even the affair with Rhoda Jaffe in the late 1940s, after all, was essentially a digression.) Jade that I am, I'm less interested in the nitty-gritty trivia than in the relationships, and Carpenter chronicles Auden's love life pretty thoroughly, starting with Auden's unrequited love for Robert Medley in 1922, without too much heterosexual condescension. If Osborne handles Auden's sexuality less gingerly, he is also less informative.

The mass of detail with which Carpenter presents us is probably necessary in order to depict Auden with all his contradictions. He was enormously fastidious about poetic technique and became more so as he got older, at the same time that his personal sloppiness increased to outrageousness: "You pee in the toilet?" he once asked a houseguest. "Everyone I know does it in the sink. It's a male privilege," and his brother John noticed while visiting that "the basin stank horribly" (pp. 408-9) in Auden's New York City apartment. He was convinced he was ugly and unlovable, yet pursued prospective loves tenaciously. He was ambivalent about his homosexuality: while he seems to have had no doubt of the value of his love for Chester, he was capable of writing a primly disapproving preface to Rae Dalven's translation of the poems of Constantine Cavafy. He went through one ideology after another—John Layard's

Voltaire Smile

The Voltaire Smile

by Ron Harvie

Gay Presses of New York

P.O. Box 294, New York NY 10014

1982, 196 pp., \$6.95

Reviewed by Rob Kaplan

Last fall, the New Museum in New York held an exhibition of works by lesbian and gay male artists, the premise being that there is such a thing as lesbian and gay male art. But what exactly is such a creature? Is it any art done by any lesbian or gay male artist, or only by any out lesbian or gay male artist? Is it only art done by such an artist that has a homosexual content (however that might be defined) or is it any art done by such an artist irrespective of content? How should such pieces be judged: by their artistic quality, their political content, both, or some other criteria all together? If I, as a gay male writer, write a story that has no lesbian or gay male characters, am I shirking my responsibilities?

These questions should be, in my mind at least, of growing concern to lesbians and gay males, for now that we have been out and around for a while, it is important that we begin to examine the art of our culture—and the culture itself, for that matter—not only from the viewpoint of “where is everyone?” (meaning: come out, come out, come out), but also from the viewpoint of now that we’re out, and now that we’ve been out for a while, what do we do about it and how do we express it? How do we establish criteria for lesbian and gay male art that does not take any of the assumptions of straight society for granted? At the same time, how do we not make a blanket rejection of everything from that society just because it is “tainted?”

The Voltaire Smile, a collection of short stories by Ron Harvie, is the type of book that brings these issues to mind. Harvie is a Canadian author whose stories have appeared in several gay male magazines and newspapers. It is clear that he is a talented writer, for even the stories that fail have unusual touches to them.

Harvie’s stories run a fairly narrow gamut of what’s commonly called “the gay male experience,” an experience that is more often than not limited to white, young, good-looking, urban gay men. There is a whole spectrum of a population to write about, but Harvie has not done so, generally limiting himself to one or two segments, and perpetuating the myth that “this is who gay men are.” Certainly, these men exist in large numbers, and it is important to write about them, but this is, ultimately, a very traditional approach to male homosexuality. It is also setting up a stereotypical situation that makes it harder for each story to succeed as literature: just because most of the characters are gay does not mean the stories work.

The best story is the one after which the book is titled: “The Voltaire Smile.” It is about a boy named Roland who takes French lessons from his gay uncle Charles, but what he learns is far more than French: he learns about Charles’ special way of viewing the world, and how Charles’ love and *joie de vivre* compare to the narrow-mindedness of Roland’s parents (and, by extension, most of society). The French lessons are stopped because Roland’s mother is afraid that Charles will molest him, and Roland grows up to be a straight, married man. Unlike the rest of the family who shun Charles for his homosexuality, Roland still loves him for the person that he is. When Charles dies, his lover lets Roland stand by him, separate from the rest of the family, in recognition of Roland’s feelings.

There are many reasons why this story works as well as it does, but the main one is that it has a narrator who grows and changes as the story progresses; through this narrator, Harvie is able to make a political statement about homosexuality in a way that is very “unpolitical.” Harvie simply shows three adult relationships—Charles’ and his lover’s, Roland’s parents, and Roland’s with his wife; it is clear that the only healthy relationship is between Charles and his lover. In fact, Roland, Charles and Charles’ lover are the only sympathetic characters in the story; they are also the only ones that rise above societal expectations about what is proper and relate to each other in an open fashion. Clearly, this is a statement about relationships in general, regardless of any of the characteristics of the people involved.

It is this same ability to transcend their immediate environment that makes the other successful stories successful. In each, Harvie makes universal statements about experiences that have no bodily limitations, that aren’t even necessarily confined to sexuality. The main characters are fully developed, three-dimensional people. Yes, most of them are gay men, and in many of these stories, the characters’ homo-

sexuality plays a large role in their experience, but it is not homosexuality per se that is the driving force behind their growth. It is their ability to grow and change, period: to love and to not love; to lose and to gain; to come to a new awareness about themselves, about their lives, and about life itself. This is the material that needs to be written about; to see so many gay characters populating these pages only makes the stories more exciting, it does not make them automatically successful.

Similarly, the stories that fail do so for the very reasons that these other stories succeed; they do not develop their characters or their situations fully, so that, ultimately, no matter how funny or serious the topic at hand, they end up being nothing but more stories about more faggots.

The last story, “The Corporation Men,” is perhaps the best example. It is the story of two gay male vice-presidents in two different companies who meet each other, begin a sexual relationship, gradually fall in love, and then kidnap a famous homophobe in an act of political revenge against the New Right. The story is basically very well written and has great politics, but, because of the lack of growth and development of the two main characters, it ends up falling flat.

The two men—Bryan and Banner—are both in their thirties and gorgeous, a problem discussed earlier. Bryan, at least, has some depth of character, and he does go through a politicizing process. Banner, however, is not much more than an arrogant bastard at the beginning and, even though his behavior toward Bryan changes, he remains pretty much that way throughout. Because the characters themselves lack impact, what happens to them loses impact. Bryan gets Banner. So what? Bryan and Banner kidnap a homophobe. So what? The story contains some great political passages. So what? When you have a bowl of mush, everything gets coated, including the raisins. No doubt Harvie intended this story to be a

work of great political import, but it ends up being little more than a political tract with a potential story in it.

Equally important is Harvie’s treatment of women, or rather the lack of it. Except for Moira, the fifty-four-year-old unmarried woman who runs the Petty-Neave Hotel with her aging father and who, when the two return in June to reopen the hotel and the maitre d’, with whom she had been in love, greets her father first, “...decided to hell with men and ran to embrace her real love, the Petty-Neave Hotel” (p. 166), there are no strong women characters. As a matter of fact, there are almost no women, period. The few that are present are usually some form of the castrating bitch. Even Moira, as independent and capable as she may be, is, as far as we know, a fifty-four-year-old virgin. Women, at least as far as the world of Harvie’s stories go, are extremely secondary creatures, and that boils down to nothing more than misogyny, a problem far too common among far too many gay men.

This is not to say that Harvie is not a good writer, for he very clearly is. In fact, even though approximately two-thirds of the stories fail, they are all interesting failures. But it is to say that it is time that we, as lesbians and gay male artists—and as lesbians and gay males—began to develop standards that go beyond “if it’s gay, it’s okay.” Yes, we must do this carefully and lovingly. But, from an artistic point of view, gay characters do not a story make, no more than do straight ones, for ideas and emotions do not have a particular sex or sexuality attached to them. Harvie’s stories that work are the ones that rise above their homosexuality to make a comment about something larger, while using the gay characters as a vehicle for this statement. Similarly, we as lesbian and gay males—artists or not—must begin to explore all the dimensions of our lives, not just our homosexuality, and, in so doing, will begin to explore more fully how our homosexuality affects all those dimensions.



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Tom Huth

Weaving Historical Voices

The Queen of Wands

By Judy Grahn
The Crossing Press
Trumansburg, NY 14886
1982, 111 pp., \$5.95

Reviewed by Susan Ekstrom

A while ago a friend returning from a conference told me that Judy Grahn had announced the end of useful lesbian-separatism. But I didn't believe it—that is, until I read her new book of poetry, *The Queen of Wands*. The voice which directs her exploration of the uses and abuses of female power is as compassionate and direct as I remembered it, but there is also a new quality: call it the absolute lack of cynicism or bitterness. The result is poetry with an incandescent strength, a willingness to name powers that have terrorized us for centuries and, at the same time, give praise to that which is primary, complex and not always easily embraced.

Within the poems and in the lengthy, fascinating historical notes she provides, Grahn refers to legends whose seeds are drawn from many different cultures. And while I wouldn't want to second-guess anyone as intuitive as Grahn has always proved herself to be, I think that part of the spirit which informs this book is an awareness that the strict divisions of separatism have cut us off from more than we bargained for—cultural and class diversity, for one thing. That, and the ability to listen to others, including those who, blindly or with great purpose, created us. As she says in "The Inheritance":

Nothing is free,
everything belongs to one another,
nothing begins new, everything has
a mother, a father, and a story.

Surprising as it may be to some, it is the woman who gives birth, who knows "my city is within me," that Grahn gives voice to. In poem after poem, she celebrates the queen who is bearer of the flame of life, and who is both leader and worker. She attempts a virtual redefinition of the way we see words like mother, queen, beauty, wife. In her examination of some of the most compelling myths Western culture has divulged, she transcends the role of historian (in the best tradition—a curious woman who digs at the roots until she finds connections our self-appointed chroniclers so skillfully hid from us) and becomes a lyrical interpreter. We hear the voices of weavers and garment factory workers, lovers and slaves stolen from West Africa. Throughout, Grahn's writing is informed and impassioned, the language precise and often playful, with a sense of timing that is nothing less than womanly.

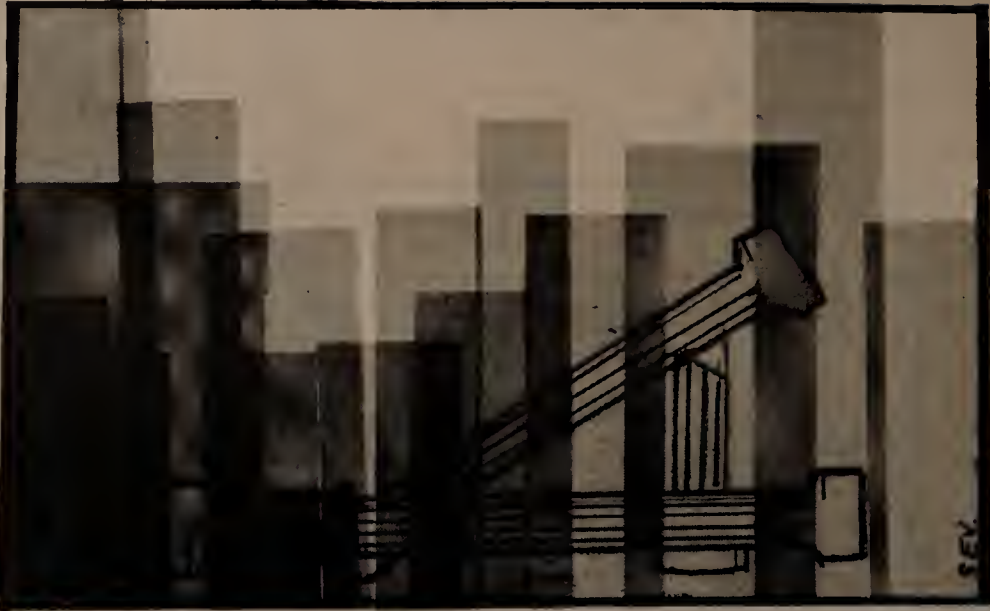
The Queen of Wands tells the story of the poisoning of an ancient woman's civilization—and then brings this vision back to the abrupt present. Grahn focuses on the myth of Helen of Troy, that queen stolen so long ago whose name has come to mean

something like the danger of female beauty. With the deftness of a true word-weaver, Grahn re-examines the legend, and finds the long-hidden record of a shift of power so immense that it warped the very way people lived their lives, beginning with birthing and continuing to the way we work, love, and dream.

My mother thought me
in one golden flash
She had that kind of mind.
But I set out to do more
than think, to do the next
task, to break, to ask
to find, be found, to ken,
and to do more than stand.
to understand

Who was Helen of Troy, anyway? For centuries we have known her as "the face that launched a thousand ships," an expression that has translated as a justification for fearing the manipulativeness of women, not to mention our strange luck at bringing on misfortunes like the Trojan War. In fact, she was one of the first in a long series of queens—and by this Grahn means more than the sterile, power-bound expression we know it as today—taken forcibly from her people. She was a weaver enslaved for her ability to create what was then as valuable as gold, and she lives now as a symbol of all women who have been and continue to be controlled and bartered by men who think they can possess beauty. Every modern woman robbed of power and self-determination, or victimized by someone else's perception of self, and every worker made to prostitute her labor—all have an eloquent ancestor in Helen of Troy.

If anybody had ever told me that I could identify with a queen, I would have had to deny it. And yet entering into Grahn's world I was struck by how approachable the lives and concerns of her characters became. Her images are always revealing rather than mystifying, and I appreciate more than ever her obvious love of language, the willingness with which she stretches it to its limits—and what she finds there. The music that runs through her work is forever com-



binning and breaking off, so that chords of meaning run from poem to poem and give the book a feeling of many voices becoming one, a strand that in turn reveals its elements.

The two poems in the book which affected me most were both long pieces narrated wholly or in part by the Spider Webster, an ancient spirit ("a fate spinner from whose very body comes the cloth of life and time and understanding") who reappears throughout. "Spider Webster's declaration: He is singing the end of the world again" is a chilling lamentation for civilizations destroyed which ends with a prophecy:

He is singing the end of the world again
he has done it before.
He has his firebrand
and his song.
I have a long, long
wand like memory.
I remember five full-worlds
and four of them have ended.

Like her earlier poem, "A Woman is talking to Death," the subject is ugly and hardly empowering, but it reflects a commitment on Grahn's part to look at everything, even the most painful subject. Like the goddess Hela (Death), who declares, "I am used for all/purposes. I do not care," she takes pictures of what is there, illuminating the events simply by writing about them.

In "Helen you always were/the factory," Grahn ties together many of the themes she introduces in the rest of the book. She alternates historical voices with an inquisitive, compassionate narrative which lovingly and insistently praises the work of women in the world, from birthing to reluctantly standing in as that demi-goddess "lady luck." The first time I read it, the poem took my breath away; the second time through, I breathed and marveled at how skillfully Grahn has woven myth and testimony with the disarming rush of energy we call poetry. *The Queen of Wands* is amazing in the scope of its vision, and it decidedly brings us nearer to hearing the truth: read it, and listen closely.

Water Dancer

Continued from Book Review page 2

One gets the feeling here, as in much of this book, of people who function more with bodies than with minds, and who value their bodies not for their flashes of brilliance, but rather for a kind of endurance. They don't play, they don't talk except in monosyllables or clichés, and for them having sex is solemn and valuable mainly in terms of how it's going to influence their next swim.

Anne, the pacer, is an old friend of Sarge, a super-athlete swimmer and coach whose son Matt died of heart failure due to over-exposure while swimming the San Antonio Straight. He called out, "Daddy, Daddy, help!" but his father didn't take him out of the water, since long-distance swimmers tend to say things like that in the middle of the swim. Not surprisingly, Sarge's grief and guilt have alienated him from his wife Ilana who, being only a champion high-diver and not a distance swimmer, is a little out of the picture. Enter young Dorey Thomas, determined to do the very swim that

finished Matt, with Sarge as her coach. There is a lesbian relationship here, again seen in primarily athletic terms.

She'd been trained so that particular movements would become part of her reflexive repertoire. One might have been the motion she used to pull Sarge's old shirt over her head, cleanly, gracefully. She took Dorey's cue and kept things at a good pace. Maybe her voice shook and she guessed that was alright, too. "Why don't you take off your clothes?" (p. 188)

I imagine that this book might appeal most strongly to athletes (or athletes manque) but it's also appealing in its difference from most of what's around, and in its very compelling obsessive exploration of a world foreign to most of us. When I finished *Water Dancer* I felt just as though I had just finished swimming the San Antonio Straight—no mean achievement for a non-athlete like myself.

—Andrea Loewenstein

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Fiddling while Faggots Burn

Homosexuality and Ethics

edited by Edward Batchelor Jr.
The Pilgrim Press
New York, 1981
261 pp., \$12.95 cloth, \$8.95 paper

Reviewed by Duncan Mitchell

A more honest title for this book would have been *Homosexuality and Theology*, or at least *Homosexuality and Judeo-Christian Ethics*. Though its editor, Edward Batchelor Jr., says his intent “is to survey the present state of the ongoing debate among ethicists,” he either couldn’t find or didn’t look for material written from a utilitarian or existentialist or Marxist or feminist viewpoint. Perhaps he thought that bringing together Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish writers between the same covers was comprehensive enough. In any case, there is little ethical discussion in its pages, though there is much of the straining at gnats and swallowing of camels which is the stock-in-trade of theologians.

Another more accurate title would be *Homosexuality and Heterosexual Ethics*, considering that of the twenty-five articles, commission reports, and book excerpts included, only one is by an acknowledged (though anonymous!) gay person. Of the remaining twenty-four contributions, all assume the primacy of heterosexuality, viewing homosexuality as an inconvenient aberration which, since it exists, must be dealt with. I had the sense as I read that even the most liberal writers felt that Christianity is heterosexual property which their consciences demanded they share with us; and that they were debating how much—how little, rather—to concede to us, like Lot deliberating whether to throw his daughters or his angelic visitors to the Sodomites. Meanwhile we are expected to wait patiently outside while the professionals work it out, not to participate directly in the debate. As if there were no queer clergy or ethicists! Mr. Batchelor himself, shown on the back flap in clerical collar, is chaplain and lecturer in religion at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York; it is perhaps understandable that he preferred to keep things in the club, if not justifiable.

What does *Homosexuality and Ethics* reveal about “the present state of the ongoing debate among” straight and mostly male Judeo-Christian “ethicists”? I found it instructive to compare the volume under review to *The Same Sex*, edited by Ralph W. Weltge and published, also by The Pilgrim Press, in 1969—especially since Mr. Batchelor includes two articles from that collection. Unlike the present volume, *The Same Sex* was interdisciplinary, including writings by sex researchers and lawyers as well as theologians, and contained pieces by gay activists writing under their own names. Of course Mr. Batchelor may not care about the secular sphere—render unto Caesar and all that, you know—and far be it from me to complain about the book he chose not to compile. In his favor he has included useful source material from Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* and Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*, an area not represented in Weltge, and position papers on homosexuality from various Jewish and Christian religious bodies. But it is my impression on the basis of the selections included by Mr. Batchelor that “the present state of the debate” is about what it was in 1969, with the possible exception of Lisa Sowle Cahill’s concluding critique, which raises questions about both sides of the controversy capably, if in technical language. Ms. Cahill’s discussion serves mainly to show, however, on how technically primitive a level the debate has so far been conducted.

If, in fact, Mr. Batchelor had set out to assemble a book in which Christians themselves discredited Christianity as an ethical guide, he could not have been more successful than he has. Four major positions are represented: homosexual acts are (1) intrinsically evil, (2) essentially imperfect, (3) to be evaluated in terms of their relational significance, and (4) natural and good. Each position is discussed by three or four of its partisans. [Does it mean anything that (1) and (2) are given ninety pages of text, while (3) and (4) get forty?] What emerges is that sincere and well-informed Christian scholars cannot agree, not merely on whether homosexuality is right or wrong (or “sinful”), but on what basis a Christian ethic should be constructed. They disagree on the role of Biblical authority and on how much weight should be granted to modern scientific findings about homosexuality. Should a linguistic or legalistic exegesis determine one’s position, or is exegesis itself contrary to the spirit of Jesus’ teaching? Can traditional positions be set aside when tradition is what defines Christianity? (The Jewish writers, by the way, are all—except for the anonymous gay—lined up on the negative side.) The writers represented in *Homosexuality and Ethics* take among themselves every possible stand, and thereby end up cancelling each other out. It is still argued, mostly by the more conservative Christians, that without Christianity or at least

some kind of religion we can’t know what is right and what is wrong. What this book shows is that even with Christianity we can’t know: not just about specific cases such as homosexuality, but even about the fundamental principles by which to decide these questions.

Calling for a return to the New Testament does no good, either, for it offers as much confusion as does current debate. Is justification by faith alone (Paul) or by faith plus works (James)? Is salvation gained (if it is gained rather than a free gift) by righteous obedience to Torah (Matthew 5:19-20, 23:1-3, Luke 11:42), or are Christians free not to obey Torah (Galatians 3:10-14, 5:1-15)? Or must one abandon one’s family (Matthew 19:29 and parallels), give up all possessions (Matthew 19:21 and parallels or simply believe in Jesus and be baptized (Mark 16:16)? Is divorce permitted when a spouse has been unchaste (Matthew 5:31-32), or is it never permitted at all (Mark 10:1-12 and Luke 16:18)? The New Testament reflects early Christian dissension, not unanimity.

Not every Christian looks for an ethical certainty with (to cite Sartre out of context) “the permanence and impenetrability of stone,” but most presumably look to their faith for a reliable guide for evaluating conduct. Whatever their reasons—to get into heaven, to escape Hell, to please God, to do what is right—they want to know what God thinks. What they will learn from *Homosexuality and Ethics* is what “a broad range of concerned professionals” think God thinks. No wonder so many people are drawn to the fanaticism of the Moral Majority: they are looking for someone who will teach “as one who had authority; and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:22), no matter how repulsive the teachings.

To do justice to the discussions in *Homosexuality and Ethics* would take a book as long as itself. Since I doubt I have to convince GCN readers that Aquinas, Barth, and the other traditionalists are wrong, I’d like to examine the selection by James B. Nelson, “Gayness and Homosexuality: Issues for the Church,” which calls for full acceptance of homosexuality by the Church and is, in practice, on our side. It seems to me, however, that Mr. Nelson reaches conclusions not warranted by his arguments, however much I may agree with some of those conclusions.

Mr. Nelson first argues (p. 187) that

Nowhere does the Bible say anything about homosexuality as a *sexual orientation*. Its references to the subject are—without exception—statements about certain kinds of homosexual *acts*. Our understanding of homosexuality as a psychosexual orientation is a relatively recent development. It is crucial to remember this, for in all probability the biblical writers in each instance were speaking of homosexual acts undertaken by persons whom the authors presumed to be heterosexually constituted.

Insofar as this is true, it proves nothing. After all, the book under review is organized according to the way each writer evaluates homosexual *acts*, so this perspective is as modern as it is ancient. Understanding homosexuality as a “psychosocial orientation” does not necessarily predispose one to accept it, either; it can still be perceived as a pathological or deviant orientation. The real question, which Mr. Nelson does not answer, is why the Biblical writers rejected homosexual acts when other ancient cultures did not.

The same question arises with Saint Paul, who set aside much of traditional Jewish teaching (such as the dietary laws and circumcision) but kept, among other things, its prohibition of homosexual acts. Like Jesus, Paul went so far as to argue that it was best to avoid *all* sexual activity if possible, though Paul did not suggest castration as a means to that end, as Jesus did (Matthew 19:12).

Mr. Nelson does not deal with Paul’s view of marriage as the lesser of two evils (1 Corinthians 7). He concentrates on Romans 1:18-32, the passage in which Paul explains “dishonorable passions” as the result of failure to acknowledge Yahweh:

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error [Romans 1:26-27, Revised Standard Version].

Mr. Nelson cites Father John J. McNeill on this passage: Paul “apparently refers only to homosexual acts indulged in by those he considered to be otherwise heterosexually inclined; acts which represent a voluntary choice to act contrary to their ordinary sexual appetite” (p. 191). Even if this interpretation was valid, without “our modern psychosexual understanding” Paul could not have understood homosexual activity except as the perverse behavior of heterosexual persons, so he must here have been referring to *all* homosexual acts, not to “only” a certain category of them—what other category could he have recognized? Nor is such a voluntary act necessarily wrong, since Paul extolled chastity, which is surely “a voluntary choice to act contrary to their ordinary sexual appetite.” One might, for example, choose to have sex with a person of the “wrong” sex out of love for that person.

But this passage can also (and probably should) be read as a polemical sermon explaining “dishonorable passions” as a non-voluntary consequence of refusal to worship the “true” god. (Even then it remains the bigoted statement of a lying hustler.) The important thing is that Paul took it for granted, did not need to prove, that homosexual acts were “dishonorable,” “shameless,” “impurity.” If, as Mr. Nelson writes, “it is difficult to read into Paul’s words at this point the modern psychosexual understanding of the gay person . . .,” that is hardly surprising. Paul thought the Holy Spirit spoke through him, and probably considered authoritative the understanding he expounded. The “modern psychosexual understanding” he most likely would have called the working of a “base mind.” “Though they know God’s decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them” (Romans 1:32). If Paul gives us “a description of homosexual *lust* . . . but hardly an account of interpersonal same-sex love—about which Paul does not speak” (p. 191), that is probably because Paul would not have recognized the sexual expression of same-sex love as anything but lust.

Mr. Nelson says that Paul “looked at the Gentile world and saw idolatry but also saw homosexual practices and the prevalence of venereal disease—and he linked them firmly together” (p. 192). That linkage was no more inevitable, and no less bigoted, than the same conclusion drawn from the same sort of evidence by Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell in our own time. The implication of the passage from Romans, and of Mr. Nelson’s explication, is that those who do not worship Yahweh are all “filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice” (Romans 1:29), which is simply a lie. Certainly, “the moral climate of Hellenistic Rome was marred by various forms of sexual commerce and exploitation” (p. 191); the same has been true of every Christian society, but no Christian would blame that fact on Christianity. Yet Christians have never hesitated to blame pagan abuses on paganism; Paul was simply the first to go on record. And Mr. Nelson agrees with him: “The idolatrous dishonoring of God *inevitably* results in the dishonoring of persons, and faithfulness to God will result in sexual expression which honors the personhood of the other” (pp. 192-3, italics added), he says, which is a bigoted libel against all non-Christians and a whitewash of the many abuses committed by Christians.

Like the other liberals represented here, Mr. Nelson believes that sexuality is appropriately expressed only in committed, presumably monogamous, relationships. But marriage and its analogues are no guarantee against loneliness, “selfish sexual expression, cruelty, impersonal sex, obsession with sex, and against actions done without willingness to take responsibility for the consequences” (p. 201). Nor does the range of behaviors commonly called “promiscuity” exclude trust, “tenderness, respect for the other, and the desire for ongoing and responsible communion with the other” (*ibid.*). A truly radical examination of sexual ethics seems beyond Mr. Nelson’s powers, and he is probably the most liberal, the most accepting, and the best-informed writer in this collection.

In conclusion then: Edward Batchelor Jr. has not achieved even his limited objectives. His selection of material is limited and probably biased against acceptance of homosexuality, and is a step backwards from previous collections—not only *The Same Sex*, but also Gerhart and Johnson’s *Loving Men/Loving Women* and Oberholtzer’s *Is Gay Good?* [Mention should also be made of Alan Soble’s *Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings* (Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1980), an anthology which comes much closer to doing what Mr. Batchelor claims he set out to do.] To a Christian reader seeking “the necessary resources for reflection and determination,” one or all of those predecessors is recommended by me. To a non-Christian reader, the scripture-treading and equivocation exhibited in *Homosexuality and Ethics* mainly serves to confirm the ethical bankruptcy of Christianity, and that even the best Christians are still mainly fiddling while faggots burn.

Salmagundi

Continued from Book Review page 1

Robinson shows insight, sensitivity, compassion and gives astute advice in the letters he exchanges with an undergraduate whom he helps to bring out. He is also acutely aware of the moral complexity and professional responsibility in such an encounter. Yet, even to the final grace note of self-criticism, he expresses such satisfaction with his conduct that it mars the whole.

Two final pieces merit praise and study. George Chauncey's dense and careful study of the medical reconceptualization of female deviance is an excellent example of the fine detailed work now being done in gay history. John Boswell's essay, "Revolutions, Universals and Sexual Categories," is a major contribution to the ongoing heated and important debate over the most basic categories to be used in thinking about gay history. I disagree with some of his points, but respectfully.

Auden

Continued from Book Review page 4

mystical psychology, D.H. Lawrence's leader-worship, Marxism—before settling on Anglicanism, leaving behind him a trail of cigarette ashes and empty wine bottles, always with the apparent zeal of a true believer, but in reality mainly in search of jargon with which to stuff his poems. While he claimed to take the Church seriously, it was really no different except that its childhood associations reminded him of his mother, whom he adored. He was capable of travesty both in later life, saying of himself, "Your mother is the resurrection and the life. If she be lifted up, she will lift up all men unto her."

Chester seems to have been no less complicated, though he never quite emerges from the shadows of Carpenter's book. This is a pity, for he was certainly important in Auden's life, but probably doesn't rate a biography of his own. A poet himself, he found it difficult being married to one of the greatest poets in the English language; of course he never managed to establish an independent reputation. Cyril Connolly once asked him: "How does it feel to be Alice B. Toklas to Gertrude Stein?" Auden raged: "I shan't rest until Cyril Connolly is either dead or in a lunatic

The heavies have moved in—many lightweights, too. Let them move on. With the few significant exceptions noted, this volume is a dud, and worse. If this is the emblem of academic and literary respectability, we don't need it. Let us welcome the Blaus and the Alters, not because they agree with us—we don't agree with each other—but because they know of what they write and they stimulate dialogue. Some of the bad writing here, though not the worst, is also by gays. Still, it remains true that the academic liberation of the homosexuals must largely be the work of the homosexuals themselves. I recommend to no one that she read this volume from cover to cover as I have had to do. I subscribed to *Salmagundi* in order to obtain this issue. After such bloated prose, ignorant writing, and irresponsible editing, I am glad my subscription has run out.

asylum" (p. 316). Unfortunately, Chester lacked Alice's self-possession and strength. When Auden died, he drank himself to death in a year and a half.

At my age (thirty-two) I'm no longer looking for gay father-figures or role models, yet I have to admit that in the end Auden disappoints me. The drinking, the slovenliness, the ambivalence about his gayness, and the retreat into religion are all depressing. There are, of course, the poems—a fat collected volume—the essays, and the libretti; and I suppose they ought to be enough to counterbalance the frequent dreariness of his life. Auden himself thought so, and said in 1965 that his life had, "so far, been unusually happy" (p. 455). And Carpenter closes his acknowledgements, and the book, by thanking "Auden himself for living a life that has been such a pleasure to write about" (p. 482). I mustn't forget that most lives have their share of dreariness, and that Auden lived (as we all still do) in a society that insisted that homosexuals were degenerates. Like so many of our gay Elder Statesmen, Auden managed not only to survive but to succeed, and he emerges from Carpenter's pages defiantly, often exuberantly, human.

Passionate Pair

Continued from Book Review page 3

result from them. For a book that contains murder, sado-masochism, and relationship, *The Rose Exterminator* is curiously lacking in passion. Carney has a stately, dense prose style that at times seems far more thoughtful than the material permits. And, contrary to Wilde's dictum, for all of the thinking the story is very much a tragedy. *The Real Thing* begins with an epigram from Laclos' *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (a book that is both thoughtful and funny), and I think that he means both that novel and *The Rose Exterminator* to be studies of human psychology. The problem here is that he has too much to say and not enough examples to what he is speaking about. I suspect that he chose the S/M scene because it exemplifies an extreme in behavior and the detective genre because it tells a good story. The problem is that he stints us on both counts. There is very little feeling for sexuality in the book (and almost no descriptions—and let's face it, who wants to read a book about S/M that has no explicit sex in it?), and his detective plot unwinds very slowly and somewhat predictably.

The Rose Exterminator is not an uninteresting book, but I'm afraid it is not as interesting as it first appears. Carney has a decidedly downbeat approach to human nature and relationships. It is tragic because his characters struggle against their own (human) limitations, and most of their activities (sexual and otherwise) seem to comprise the acting out of that struggle. The book is more thoughtful than most being published today, but as a novel it is passionless and difficult to move through or relate to.

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Alcoholism Program

Continued from page 6

homophobia is seen as the problem, not the presence of lesbians. Says Norma Finkelstein, "Every once in a while we have issues between lesbians and heterosexuals at the house we run. We usually respond by holding a discussion of sexuality. We are a traditionally-structured agency, but we are trying to meet the needs of all women. Our house is a total group setting, and we've learned to try to be very open with women who come from many different backgrounds. We may have a woman who is fifty years old from South Boston who is terribly homophobic. But we've found that she can live, become friends, with, and help a lesbian woman, and vice versa. For the most part, I'm pleased that we can do this in the residential setting. We don't see the presence of lesbians in the house as a problem. We've had other types of conflicts in the house too, for example, racism. If we were just treating feminist and non-racist women, we wouldn't be treating very much of the world."

Feminism seems to be very much the philosophy of the Women's Alcoholism Program, even though the agency is traditionally structured and govern-

ment-funded. Says Norma, "Our overriding philosophy is to combine feminism with some understanding of alcoholism, and to try to empower women to take control of their lives instead of letting their drinking control them."

Norma doesn't feel that a global political analysis of alcoholism is possible. "Lots of people would love to put alcoholism in a larger perspective, but the data doesn't support it. To me what is political is that to be an alcoholic is to have no power and no control. You are at the mercy of other people. But whatever the reasons for an individual's alcoholism, recovery is an empowering political thing to do, and to help other people do. When they are sober, people can look at their lives and perhaps make a contribution to the world."

From talking to the women at CASPAR's Women's Alcoholism Program, I got an overall impression of an agency that is managing to successfully combine the best of several different worlds: lesbian liberation; feminism; Alcoholics Anonymous; government funding; and traditional social services. Hopefully, they are serving as a model for other agencies around the country, and lesbians in more

and more communities will be able to find facilities as open to them as CASPAR's.

Alcoholism is a problem in the lesbian community, and it is one that no one can deal with alone. The community as a whole must take part. As Margie Adam told me, "The disease of alcoholism is much more complex than a set of politics. The devastation of alcohol and drug abuse know no boundaries, and no matter how politically right-on you are, you can still become a victim of them. What a feminist can do is to offer supportive environments where people wanting to live sober lives can get reinforced."

Cheryl Qamar will be giving a workshop on "Lesbian Alcoholics: Fact or Fiction" at a conference on "Alcohol and Women's Lives" to be held at the Boston University School of Nursing on Saturday, April 30th. (Another workshop, which I can't help but mention, is entitled "Could Holistic Health and Feminist Therapy Have Saved Janis Joplin?")

CASPAR's general information phone number is (617) 661-1316. Their new address is 6 Camellia Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139.



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—Information gathered by Ray Fidler.

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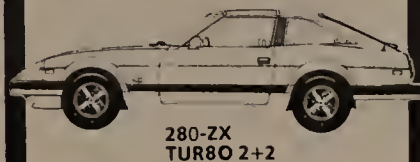
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Salmagundi

Continued from Book Review page 1

Robinson shows insight, sensitivity, compassion and gives astute advice in the letters he exchanges with an undergraduate whom he helps to bring out. He is also acutely aware of the moral complexity and professional responsibility in such an encounter. Yet, even to the final grace note of self-criticism, he expresses such satisfaction with his conduct that it mars the whole.

Two final pieces merit praise and study. George Chauncey's dense and careful study of the medical reconceptualization of female deviance is an excellent example of the fine detailed work now being done in gay history. John Boswell's essay, "Revolutions, Universals and Sexual Categories," is a major contribution to the ongoing heated and important debate over the most basic categories to be used in thinking about gay history. I disagree with some of his points, but respectfully.

Auden

Continued from Book Review page 4

mystical psychology, D.H. Lawrence's leader-worship, Marxism—before settling on Anglicanism, leaving behind him a trail of cigarette ashes and empty wine bottles, always with the apparent zeal of a true believer, but in reality mainly in search of jargon with which to stuff his poems. While he claimed to take the Church seriously, it was really no different except that its childhood associations reminded him of his mother, whom he adored. He was capable of travestying both in later life, saying of himself, "Your mother is the resurrection and the life. If she be lifted up, she will lift up all men unto her."

Chester seems to have been no less complicated, though he never quite emerges from the shadows of Carpenter's book. This is a pity, for he was certainly important in Auden's life, but probably doesn't rate a biography of his own. A poet himself, he found it difficult being married to one of the greatest poets in the English language; of course he never managed to establish an independent reputation. Cyril Connolly once asked him: "How does it feel to be Alice B. Toklas to Gertrude Stein?" Auden raged: "I shan't rest until Cyril Connolly is either dead or in a lunatic

The heavies have moved in—many lightweights, too. Let them move on. With the few significant exceptions noted, this volume is a dud, and worse. If this is the emblem of academic and literary respectability, we don't need it. Let us welcome the Blaus and the Alters, not because they agree with us—we don't agree with each other—but because they know of what they write and they stimulate dialogue. Some of the bad writing here, though not the worst, is also by gays. Still, it remains true that the academic liberation of the homosexuals must largely be the work of the homosexuals themselves. I recommend to no one that she read this volume from cover to cover as I have had to do. I subscribed to *Salmagundi* in order to obtain this issue. After such bloated prose, ignorant writing, and irresponsible editing, I am glad my subscription has run out.

asylum" (p. 316). Unfortunately, Chester lacked Alice's self-possession and strength. When Auden died, he drank himself to death in a year and a half.

At my age (thirty-two) I'm no longer looking for gay father-figures or role models, yet I have to admit that in the end Auden disappoints me. The drinking, the slovenliness, the ambivalence about his gayness, and the retreat into religion are all depressing. There are, of course, the poems—a fat collected volume—the essays, and the libretti; and I suppose they ought to be enough to counterbalance the frequent dreariness of his life. Auden himself thought so, and said in 1965 that his life had, "so far, been unusually happy" (p. 455). And Carpenter closes his acknowledgements, and the book, by thanking "Auden himself for living a life that has been such a pleasure to write about" (p. 482). I mustn't forget that most lives have their share of dreariness, and that Auden lived (as we all still do) in a society that insisted that homosexuals were degenerates. Like so many of our gay Elder Statesmen, Auden managed not only to survive but to succeed, and he emerges from Carpenter's pages defiantly, often exuberantly, human.

Passionate Pair

Continued from Book Review page 3

result from them.

For a book that contains murder, sado-masochism, and relationship, *The Rose Exterminator* is curiously lacking in passion. Carney has a stately, dense prose style that at times seems far more thoughtful than the material permits. And, contrary to Wilde's dictum, for all of the thinking the story is very much a tragedy. *The Real Thing* begins with an epigram from Laclos' *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (a book that is both thoughtful and funny), and I think that he means both that novel and *The Rose Exterminator* to be studies of human psychology. The problem here is that he has too much to say and not enough examples to what he is speaking about. I suspect that he chose the S/M scene because it exemplifies an extreme in behavior and the detective genre because it tells a good story. The problem is that he stints us on both counts. There is very little feeling for sexuality in the book (and almost no descriptions—and let's face it, who wants to read a book about S/M that has no explicit sex in it?), and his detective plot unwinds very slowly and somewhat predictably.

The Rose Exterminator is not an uninteresting book, but I'm afraid it is not as interesting as it first appears. Carney has a decidedly downbeat approach to human nature and relationships. It is tragic because his characters struggle against their own (human) limitations, and most of their activities (sexual and otherwise) seem to comprise the acting out of that struggle. The book is more thoughtful than most being published today, but as a novel it is passionless and difficult to move through or relate to.

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Alcoholism Program

Continued from page 6

homophobia is seen as the problem, not the presence of lesbians. Says Norma Finkelstein, "Every once in a while we have issues between lesbians and heterosexuals at the house we run. We usually respond by holding a discussion of sexuality. We are a traditionally-structured agency, but we are trying to meet the needs of all women. Our house is a total group setting, and we've learned to try to be very open with women who come from many different backgrounds. We may have a woman who is fifty years old from South Boston who is terribly homophobic. But we've found that she can live, become friends, with, and help a lesbian woman, and vice versa. For the most part, I'm pleased that we can do this in the residential setting. We don't see the presence of lesbians in the house as a problem. We've had other types of conflicts in the house too, for example, racism. If we were just treating feminist and non-racist women, we wouldn't be treating very much of the world."

Feminism seems to be very much the philosophy of the Women's Alcoholism Program, even though the agency is traditionally structured and govern-

ment-funded. Says Norma, "Our overriding philosophy is to combine feminism with some understanding of alcoholism, and to try to empower women to take control of their lives instead of letting their drinking control them."

Norma doesn't feel that a global political analysis of alcoholism is possible. "Lots of people would love to put alcoholism in a larger perspective, but the data doesn't support it. To me what is political is that to be an alcoholic is to have no power and no control. You are at the mercy of other people. But whatever the reasons for an individual's alcoholism, recovery is an empowering political thing to do, and to help other people do. When they are sober, people can look at their lives and perhaps make a contribution to the world."

From talking to the women at CASPAR's Women's Alcoholism Program, I got an overall impression of an agency that is managing to successfully combine the best of several different worlds: lesbian liberation; feminism; Alcoholics Anonymous; government funding; and traditional social services. Hopefully, they are serving as a model for other agencies around the country, and lesbians in more

and more communities will be able to find facilities as open to them as CASPAR's.

Alcoholism is a problem in the lesbian community, and it is one that no one can deal with alone. The community as a whole must take part. As Margie Adam told me, "The disease of alcoholism is much more complex than a set of politics. The devastation of alcohol and drug abuse know no boundaries, and no matter how politically right-on you are, you can still become a victim of them. What a feminist can do is to offer supportive environments where people wanting to live sober lives can get reinforced."

Cheryl Qamar will be giving a workshop on "Lesbian Alcoholics: Fact or Fiction" at a conference on "Alcohol and Women's Lives" to be held at the Boston University School of Nursing on Saturday, April 30th. (Another workshop, which I can't help but mention, is entitled "Could Holistic Health and Feminist Therapy Have Saved Janis Joplin?")

CASPAR's general information phone number is (617) 661-1316. Their new address is 6 Camellia Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139.



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—Information gathered by Ray Fidler.

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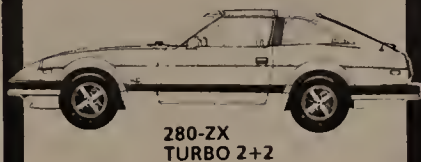
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Suppt orgnzn for lesbians, 1151 Mass Av, Camb, Old Bap. Raps evry Tues, Thurs 8 pm; 35 pls rap 2nd Wed, last Fri. 8 pm & 3rd Sat. 7 pm; Parents & Co-parents rap 1st & 3rd Mons, 8 pm. Softball evry Sun 3 pm Apr-Sept, weathr permtn. Magazine Fld. Bimonthly mag FOCUS \$8. Mnthly social & ndraising event. Info & office hrs 661-3633. All women invited to participate.

GAY LESBIAN AND JEWISH?
Am Tikva welcomes you. Activities include religious observances, discussions, potluck dinners, folk dancing, etc. For events, check GCN Calendar, call (617) 782-8894 or write PO Box 11, Camb, MA 02238.

BOSTON LESBIAN/GAY CATHOLICS
Dignity/Boston sponsors a liturgy for Lesbian/Gay and concerned Catholics every Sunday at Arlington Street Church (Boston), right side entrance on Arlington St., at 5:30 pm. For info call Dignity/Boston MF 7-10 pm, Sun 2-5 pm, 536-6518. DIGNITY/BOSTON, 355 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116. (c)

S D A LESBIANS & GAYS
Learn about S D A Kinship Inc. An orgnzn for lesbians & gays of S D A background. For more info & sample copy newsletter, write PO Box 404 Laconia NH 03247. (41)

PUBLICATIONS

Special issue of CHANGES on Feminism published jointly by Solidarity A Socialist-Feminist Network and the International Socialists. Includes articles on the lesbian and gay movement, women's liberation, personal politics, reproductive rights, women and the disarmament movement and more. Available for \$2.50 (includes postage) from Solidarity, 725 O Farrell #35, SF, CA 94109 or from Nancy Wechsler c/o GCN 167 Tremont Street Boston, MA 02111

FOCUS
A Journal for Lesbians. America's oldest literary mag for lesbians. 11 yrs continuous publication. Fiction, poetry, reviews, essays, graphics. Quality our only criterion. Submissions as well as subscriptions always welcome. Or come see us, first Weds of the month. 7pm at OCBC, 1151 Mass Av, Camb, MA 02138, or DOB office. \$8/yr for 6 issues. \$1.35 + 40c postage for sample copy. \$10/yr for libraries. Plain envelope. For further info (617) 259-0063.

GUARDIAN: Independent radical news-weekly. Covers Gay, women and minority struggles, and international progressive movements. Special offer 4 issues FREE. Write Guardian Dept. GCN, 33 W 17th St., NY NY 10011. (ex)

Monthly calendar of women's events in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, \$1 for sample issue, \$7.50 per year. Write: Full Circle, P.O. Box 235, Contoocook, NH 03229. (15)

PLEXUS
San Francisco Bay Area Women's Newspaper since 1974 brings you monthly feminist news, reviews, features, community forum, calendar & more. Subs are just \$8/yr; sample copy \$1. 545 Athol Ave., Oakland, CA 94606. (1/mo)

1983 brochures from Spartacus and the Coltsfoot Press now available. Write for free copies to: Spartacus, PO Box 3496, 1001 AG Amsterdam, Netherlands. (3x)

HOW GAY IS YOUR LIBRARY?
Pamphlet of tips for non-librarians on how to get gay materials into libraries, available from the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association. "Censored, Ignored, Overlooked, Too Expensive? How to Get Gay Materials into Libraries" explains library selection policies in a general way, and tells how you can get a library to buy more gay books & periodicals. Also tells what to do if library refuses your request; why gay bks are sometimes kept where you have to ask for them; & how to donate materials to the library. \$1 to Barbara Gittings — GTF, P.O. Box 2383, Phila., PA 19103. Bkstore & bulk order discount available. More info: Barbara Gittings (215) 382-3222. (c)



i Lucha!

TO ALL THOSE WHO IN AND OUT OF PRISON FIGHT AGAINST THEIR BONDAGE (Alexander Berkman, Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist).



Being black, female, gay, and a convict is a bit much for prejudiced minds to handle, but it should not be a handicap for those sharing some of those qualities. I'm looking for sensitive, intelligent, strong-minded women to correspond with. I am a six foot Leo woman into writing and spiritual exploration. Send some sweet stories and intellectual conversation and you'll receive the same. Renee HOLMES, 13415, 1479 Collins Ave., Marysville, OH 43040.

I am lonely here in this god-forsaken hell hole. I just got out of maximum where I did 4 months for an argument I had in the serving area. I was cuffed, shackled, and chained and then dragged out of my unit. I would like to write to women over 21. I'm from Boston on Tremont St. Alice THOMPSON, Box 99, Framingham, MA 01701.



GCN GAY AND LESBIAN PRISONER PROJECT

We send free papers, books (when they are donated and when money for postage is donated) and run free penpal ads. (There's sometimes a long waiting list because of limited space.) Little by little as we get more volunteer labor power we'll be looking for other ways to support lesbians and gay men behind bars. If you can help with your time or a contribution (of money or paperbacks), please send to Gay and Lesbian Prisoner Project, c/o GCN, 167 Tremont St., 5th Fl., Boston, MA 02111. Thanks!

GM 23 would like penpals to write to. I'm sincere. Ricky MILBURN, EF 151355, 4600 Fulton Mill Rd, Macon GA 31213.

Very lonely, very masculine prisoner would like some very feminine type friends and penpals who appreciate a no BS person. Charles WORKMAN, 42066, Box 600, FB-7, Canon City CO 81212.

I am a very open gay and lonely. I love all kinds of sex and I love to read, I love to party too. Steve OTTO, 114488, J-206, Hominy OK 74035.

Gay prisoner wishes to hear from gays all over. Interests are rhythm and blues and men. William CONCANNON, 128-038-C, Box 7, San Pedro CA 90731.

I am very masculine, and into horseback riding, camping, dancing, traveling and making new friends. Shannon SNELL, Box 511, 163-293, Columbus OH 43216.

170 (solid) pounds, bisexual, seeking friendship and love for possible relocation after parole. Love to laugh and not afraid to cry and most of all need someone who cares. Lloyd KAUFMAN, 15794, Box 607, Carson City NV 89702.

To all transsexuals and transvestites who are lonely, just like me. Perchance there is one among the multitude of you who would care to reach out and hold my hand through the US mail service in friendship Homer MIDGYETTE, Box E, 115386, Jackson MS 39204.

I would really love to get some gay reading in here and if possible a penpal would be a great pleasure. Richard EMBER, 127238, Deep Meadow CRR Center, State Farm, VA 23160.

Looking for a friend I enjoy quiet times and lonely walks in the woods and good friends. Richard ODOM, 44480, Unit 24 Ext., Parchman MS 38738.

Would like to start writing to other gay people in or out of prison. I will answer all letters sent to me. Robert PRYOR, A-154365, 777 West Riverside Dr., Ionia MI 48846.

Young, lonely prisoner wishes to correspond by letter and phone if you wish. Seeks any age friends. Shaun CASSIDY, A-159973, Box 911, Bemis Rd., Ypsilanti MI 48197.

Gay prisoner needs correspondence and contact with free world people. I am 35 and have been here for 16 years and have no real contact with gay people. Please write David BRUCE, AO15516, Box 7, Deer Lodge MT 59722.

27 year old black male wishes to correspond with anyone. Clarence COLVIN, 163-024, Box 57, Marion OH 43302.

Young male incarcerated. Intelligent, lively and lovely. Thank you for being there. Tim COLE, 050286-G-61, Box 488, Polk City FL 33868.

Professional, 34, sincere Jewish male paying his debt to society, having varied interests from A to Z. Would like to hear from all who enjoy the gay life. I.R.SAULMON, 101601, J-206, Box 220, Hominy OK 74035.

Young incarcerated male seeking correspondence with gays. Am sincere and in need of companionship. Anthony ROBINSON, A-066602, Box 488, Polk City FL 33868.

I have written some essays on theater and prisons and on being gay in prison and would like to submit them to you. Also it would be nice to have someone to write. Thanks a lot for all you do for us here inside. Terry HEITMAN, 929 Robberson, Springfield, MO 65804.

My hobbies are reading and letter writing. I don't care how old you are or what color your skin is. Why should it matter if we are lonely and seeking out other people to share our thoughts with? If you want to, write Marvin BROCKETT, 04206-164, Box 1000, Marion, IL 62959.

I'm starting to take some college courses and would like to write to some like-minded people. Maybe I can learn something from them about the college business, especially history and science. I'd like to be a teacher eventually. Larry CLAY, 5323, P.O. Box 41, Michigan City IN 46360.

On death row at 24 I'll write to anyone who'll write to me. Frankie GUINAN, Box 900, CP-18, Jefferson City MO 65102.

Prisoners Seeking Friends

Readers (inside and out): Almost all ads are taken from much longer letters which we cannot print in full in the free space GCN has provided. Even so, there's usually a waiting list of 3 to 6 weeks and ads usually only run once or twice (unless we can't get new ones done because of other work).

I am a sexy male, even if I say so myself and am interested in any and all gays and bisexuals who like the quiet life. Thomas JACKSON, Box 3249, Monroe LA 71210.

I am seeking a lasting relationship and hope to find that through your newspaper. Doug HUFFMAN, 42936, C-25, Parchman MS 38738.

Lonely person wishing to correspond with other males. I'm 24 and a bit deserted in this world, so if you want to meet someone and have a moment, let me have you to correspond with John AARONSON, B-059025, Box 1100, Avon Park FL 33825. (Mail Box 1405).

I hope to correspond with some of my brothers and sisters in California. I am a free-lance florist and will be looking for work some time at the end of this year in LA. Daniel STRICKLAND, 425 First St. Cell 201, West Palm Beach, FL 33401.

Working on becoming a writer and would like to correspond with anyone who might be willing to help me in my struggle. I will answer all sincere letters. Morris GYLES, 89329, Camp J, Gator 4-L-11, Angola LA 70712.

I study medicine and am in law school. I speak Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, and am working on English. I wish to correspond with other gays. Benjamin RAMOS, PMB #92800, Oak 3, Angola LA 70712.

If you write I promise to answer. I can use all the encouragement I can get. Roger PETTIT, 1600 W. 24th, F-12, Pueblo CO 81003.

I would especially like to correspond with a young man. He will need to be kind and gently, because that's the way I am. John LEMMON, 103674, Rt. 1, Box 548, Lexington OK 73051.

Somewhat down and out lonely prisoner. I need some letters, fan mail and other gay news from the streets to keep me happy this season. Ronald DIXON, Box 100, Jean NV 89026.

Doing time, would like to hear from other gays in the U.S. I'm 24 years old. Guy COX, 15481, Box 41, Michigan City IN 46064.

I'm black as midnight, love sports and want a friend who's sincere. George STEVENSON, 113433, Box 97, McAlester OK 74501.

Now that my confinement is coming to a climax, I would very much like to meet new people with hopes of establishing a constructive relationship with positive-minded individuals. I want to relocate once I'm released this year and would like to hear from anyone who could appreciate a good friend. Thomas JONES, 139 563, Box 69, London OH 43140.

I am 38 yrs old, silver hair, hazel eyes. My interests are good books, good movies, travel, meeting people, sports and just generally enjoying life. I would like to correspond with someone. Michael MASON, 53692-146/U-1, Box 1010, Bastrop TX 78602.

Young GM, lonely, sexy, understanding and amicable seeking to correspond with a male, feminine homosexual. Raymond KELOW, 165-426, Box 45699, Lucasville OH 45699.

Young GM down and out needs correspondence from our kind. Hopefully, Timmy FREDERICK, 075884, A-8, Box 158, Lowell FL 32663.

Looking for kind, caring individuals to correspond with. I enjoy music, nature, art, late evenings and honest people. Dale BROWN, 164-458, Box 45699, Lucasville OH 45699.

I would appreciate writing fellow gays with an interest in stamp collecting. James HANKINS, Box 14, Boise ID 83707.



Calendar

weekly events

New London, CT — Gay and Lesbian Community at Connecticut College meets 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. Info: 442-7458.

monday

Portsmouth, NH — Seacoast Gay Men. 7pm. Info: P.O. Box 1394, Portsmouth 03801.

Waltham, MA — Triskelion, the Brandeis Gay/Lesbian Coalition. General discussion group at 9pm. Usdan Student Ctr. Conf. Rm. C. Info: 647-4353, or Box 2792, Brandeis U., Waltham, 02254.

Nashua, NH — Nashua Area Gays meet 8pm. Info: Tony 424-3252, or write: Nashua Area Gays, Box 3472, Nashua 03061.

tuesday

Cambridge, MA — Boston chapter, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays meets 1st Tue of the month in conference room 1A Sherrill Hall Library, Episcopal Divinity School 99 Brattle, Info: 436-5393 or P.O. Box 125-S101, Arlington, MA 02174.

Cambridge, MA — Lesbian SM support group. Every Tues. 7:30pm. Info: 776-7957. Open to lesbians supportive of or into SM.

Boston, MA — Urania: lesbian and bisexual women's SM support group. Safe, non-competitive space for women of all levels of experience to share political and personal aspects of our sexuality. 131 Cambridge St. 7:30pm. Info: Hajhor 623-7258.

Cambridge, MA — Daughters of Bilitis Discussion and social group Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. (Harv. Sq.) 8pm. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Info: 661-3633.

Pittsfield, MA — Berkshire County Gay Coalition meets 2nd and 4th Tues. Info: (413) 442-7772.

Hartford, CT — Greater Hartford Lesbian and Gay Task Force meets at Hill Ctr., 350 Farmington Ave. 7pm (First Tues.) Info: 249-7691.

Manchester, NH — Manchester Men's Group, weekly support group for gay and bisexual men, meet Tuesdays at 7:30pm for coffee and discussion. Info: Jack 669-0096.

New London, CT — New London Gay Men's Forum, support group for gay and bisexual men. Info: 447-0155 (Noon to 7pm).

Portland, ME — Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous meeting at First Parish, Unitarian. 425 Congress St. 8pm. Open to all.

Brattleboro, VT — Southern Vermont Lesbian and Gay Men's Coalition meets on the second Tuesday of the month at the Common Ground Restaurant, 25 Elliot St. 7:30pm

wednesday

Boston, MA — Fathers in Transition, a group of gay/bi fathers meeting Weds. for friendship and support. Info: Exodus Ctr. 266-0612, or write: Fathers in Transition, c/o GCN Box 6, 167 Tremont St., Boston, MA 02111.

Boston, MA — Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY). New persons' meeting 6:30pm; general meeting and group discussion 7-9pm. For youth 22 and under. Evangelist Church, 35 Bowdoin St. (Beacon Hill) Info: 497-8282.

Boston, MA — Boston Gay Men's Chorus meets every Wed. from 7-10pm at the YWCA, 140 Clarendon St. (Copley Sq.) Info: 522-6983.

Boston, MA — Walk-in VD screening and treatment for and by gay men 6:30-8pm. Fenway Community Health Center, 16 Haverland St. (near Auditorium stop). 267-7573.

Boston, MA — Lunchtime for lesbians. Isolated during the workday downtown? Interested in a lunchtime hangout/discussion group? Come to 80 Boylston St. Rm 855 (corner Boylston and Tremont). Noon. Info: 542-5188.

Boston, MA — Lesbian and Gay Media Advocates (LAGMA) meeting 7:30-9:30pm. New members welcome. Help make the media more responsive to our needs. Info: 542-5679.

Bridgewater, MA — South Shore Gay and Lesbian Alliance meets Weds. Info: 584-4997.

Cambridge, MA — Lesbian "coming out" group, new weekly open rap group, is now meeting at Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. (Central Sq.) 8-10pm. Info: 354-8897.

Cambridge, MA — Daughters of Bilitis. 35+ women's discussion and social group. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8pm. Second Wed. and last Fri. of each month.

Hyannis, MA — Lesbian Support Group meets first Wed. of every month. 7:30pm. New members welcome. Orientation, social meetings. Warren Women's Center, 298 Main St. Info: 771-6739.

Nashua, NH — Greater Nashua Area of NH Lambda sponsors speakers and/or raps on the 2nd Wed. and 4th Thurs. 7:30pm. Business meets on 1st Sat. Info: (603) 889-1416.

Hartford, CT — Lesbian AA meeting. Hill Ctr. 350 Farmington Ave. 8pm. Info: 247-8797.

Hampden County, MA — Social/Support Group for Lesbians 8pm. Info: Debbie 532-5878 or Julie 532-4959.

Cambridge, MA — Narcotics Anonymous Gay Meeting 7 Temple St. (Central Sq.) 8:30-10pm. A twelve step recovery program for those whose "drug of choice" was other than alcohol.

Cambridge, MA — Boston National Organization for Women (NOW) Lesbian Rights Task Force meets 4th Wed. of month at 99 Bishop Allen Dr. (Central Sq.) Plan lobbying, public educ. and consciousness raising. Info: 661-6015.

thursday

Cambridge, MA — Lesbian Liberation, an open discussion group. 8-10pm. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Info: 354-8807.

Somerville, MA — TV/TS Peer Support Group. Gender Clinic. Info: Martha 666-8280.

Cambridge, MA — Lesbians with children Support group. 8-10pm. Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 354-8807.

Boston, MA — Northeastern U. School of Law Lesbian and Gay Caucus presents the film "In the best interests of the children". 7:30pm. 400 Huntington Ave. Attorney Cindy Rizzo will lead a discussion afterwards.

Cambridge, MA — "Gender, Power, and Family Violence", a discussion by Linda Gordon and Winnie Breines. Frost Lounge, Ell Bldg. Northeastern U. 8pm.

29 fri

Boston, MA — GCN VOLUNTEER NIGHT!! Come help send out the paper to our subscribers. Refreshments and good times! Come anytime after 6 to our space at 167 Tremont (near the Boylston T stop). There's an intercom at the door if it's not open. Come and get a free paper and meet some nice people! Info: 426-4469.

30 sat

Boston, MA — Chiltern Mt. Club. 2 events West River Release Trip. Info: Arnie 288-5333, and Mt. Wachusett hike (5 years ago this weekend. Chiltern had its first hike here). Info: Bliss (603) 883-5583 or John (617) 648-9185.

Augusta, ME — Interweave Potluck supper and gay stamp collection presentation. Winthrop St. Universalist Church (off State St.) at 6pm.

Northampton, MA — Pioneer Valley People's Gay Alliance meets on first and third Thursdays at the Unitarian Society, 220 Main St. 7:30pm. Info: (413) 584-7903 or write P.O. Box 181, Northampton, MA 01061.

Hartford, CT — Gay Al-Anon meeting for lesbians and gay men at Trinity Church Parish House, Farmington Ave. 7:30pm. Info: 247-8797.

friday

BOSTON, MA — GAY COMMUNITY NEWS (THAT'S US!) ALWAYS NEEDS HELP SENDING OUT THE PAPER ON FRIDAY EVES. COME BY FOR A FEW HOURS TO OUR NEW SPACE AT 187 TREMONT (ON THE CORNER, NEAR BOYLSTON T STOP) ANYTIME AFTER 6 AND LEND A HAND. REFRESHMENTS AND GOOD TIMES! EVERY BODY WILL COME! Info: 426-4469, THANKS!

Cambridge, MA — Amazon Lesbian Al-Anon. Mt. Auburn Hosp. Living Rm. Clark Bldg. 8-9:30pm. Newcomers meeting from 7-8pm on the first Friday.

Danbury, CT — The Gay and Lesbian Alliance of Greater Danbury meets on Fridays from 7:30 to 10pm in the Green Room of the First Congregational Church, corner of Deer Hill Ave. and West St.

Hartford, CT — Your Turf, a weekly drop-in center for lesbian and gay teenagers 7-9pm at the Hill Center, 350 Farmington Ave. (upstairs). Sponsored by the Coalition of Sexual Minorities.

Pittsfield, MA — Weekly meetings of Lesbians United Into Women's Services center. 499-2425.

Concord, NH — Concord Men's Group meets Fridays at 7:30pm for coffee and discuss on. Info: Herb 485-5612.

Providence, RI — Rhode Island Gay and Lesbian Youth meets every Sat. from 1-5pm for youth 14-21 years of age. Info: MCC 272-9247 or Gay Helo Line 751-3322 (eves)

saturday

Providence, RI — Rhode Island Gay and Lesbian Youth meets every Sat. from 1-5pm for youth 14-21 years of age. Info: MCC 272-9247 or Gay Helo Line 751-3322 (eves)

Boston, MA — Chiltern Mt. Club. Regularly scheduled sports and outdoors events. General info: John 275-1336, Linda 734-4066, John 864-0823. Volleyball: Jay 262-4896. Basketball: Kieran 232-7229.

Boston, MA — Front Runners/Boston, gay men and lesbian running club. Info: 39 Milford, Boston 02118 or 451-6364.



coming events



Boston, MA — The Boston Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee will meet every Thurs. eve at 7pm until June 18 (Lesbian/Gay Pride Celebration/March) to organize entertainment, fundraising, publicity, etc. for the events. Everyone welcome. Boston Evening Clinic, 314 Comm. Ave. (near Aud. T stop). Info: 262-4777.



apr 24 sun

Cambridge, MA — Gay and Lesbian Speakers Bureau. Orientation Meeting. If you've ever thought about "speaking for your life," here's your chance! Check out the Bureau. 67 Pleasant St. 7pm.

Boston, MA — "A Woman's Choice," a dance-theater performance by Keriak and Co. which is a strong statement on reproductive rights, of importance to both men and women. YWCA Copley Square, 140 Clarendon, 3-5pm. Tickets are \$5, available at New Words, Glad Day and MOBE. Info: 923-4455.

25 mon

Boston, MA — Boston Gay and Lesbian Political Alliance and Mass Gay Political Caucus are cosponsoring a Mayoral candidates night at UMass Boston, Park Sq. Rm 222. 7:30pm. Admission free.

26 tues

Boston, MA — Potluck for lesbians and gay men working in the Harvard Medical Area. 5:30 at Countway Aud. Beverages provided.

27 wed

Boston, MA — Lesbian and Gay Media Advocates (LAGMA) authors of *Talk Back! The Gay Person's Guide to Media Action*, will facilitate a workshop and discussion of how to analyze and respond to the media. Open to the community. 7:30-9:30pm. GCN office, 167 Tremont St. (near Boylston T stop) Info: 492-3433 (2-6pm).

28 thurs

Boston, MA — GCN prootreading. Read next week's news this week. Info: 426-4469.

The deadline for Calendar items is Monday at noon for the following issue.....